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STAGING SPONTANEITY: CORPOREAL EXPRESSION AND THE PARADOX OF ACTING IN THE GERMAN THEATER DISCOURSE AROUND 1800

Matthew West Feminella

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Approved by:

Clayton Koelb

Eric Downing

Jonathan Hess

Gabriel Trop

Inga Pollmann

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ABSTRACT

MATTHEW WEST FEMINELLA: Staging Spontaneity: Corporeal Expression and the Paradox of Acting in the German Theater Discourse Around 1800
(Under the direction of Clayton Koelb)

This dissertation explores how theories of spontaneity and the body are integrated into acting discourses on the German stage. I argue that the spontaneity of the human body represents a recurring feature in the acting discourses around 1800, which provoked a variety of responses from theorists of the theaters. These responses range from theorizing how to utilize corporeal spontaneity for the benefit of the theater to how to diminish its potential inimical effects on dramatic production. Theorizing about actors and spontaneity led these thinkers to re-conceptualize their notions of anthropology, semiotics, media, and human agency.

Chapter 1 examines how Gotthold Ephraim Lessing in his correspondences and dramaturgical writings develops acting techniques that seek to reconcile intentionality and spontaneity: actors create mental images of bodies through poetic language that in turn are integrated into their own affective and bodily motions, thus artificially producing the impression of spontaneous natural action on stage. Chapter 2 explores the evolution of Friedrich Schiller's conception of acting and spontaneity from his early dramaturgical writings on the affect of actors to his notion of theatrical grace in "On Grace and Dignity." Chapter 3 examines Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's attempts in his "Rules for Actors" to mitigate the uncertainty generated by spontaneity by introducing corporeal regimes of

bodily discipline that regulate actors both inside and outside of the theater. Chapter 4 investigates how Heinrich von Kleist frames spontaneity as a solution to an anthropological and theatrical problem in "On the Puppet Theater," in which the human body's ability to react without prior thought can accomplish otherwise elusive physical and mental tasks.

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Introduction

In 1976 Paramount Pictures released *Marathon Man*, a film that stars two of the most prolific and prominent actors of their time: Laurence Olivier and Dustin Hoffman. While both received critical acclaim for their performances, with Olivier earning an Academy Award nomination, the two actors were noted for approaching their roles with opposing acting methodologies. The contrast between their styles is illustrated in this well-known, if somewhat apocryphal anecdote.

> The role called for Hoffman to play a man at the end of his physical and psychological rope since most of the film involved double crosses and shady killers out to get him. To put himself in the mindset of a man losing control Hoffman didn't sleep for days at a time and let his body become disheveled and unhealthy. Finally, after all this work Hoffman notices his co-star Sir Lawrence Olivier sitting comfortably on a stage chair without a care in the world. Surprised that he is the only one on set who has gone to such rigorous lengths, he asks Olivier how he's able to make his performance look so real. The confused Olivier stops, takes a breath and calmly responds, "Dear boy, it's called acting."[1]

Hoffmann's style, called Method Acting, derives originally from acting theories and practices from Constantin Stanislavski. Stanislavski's system became one of the dominant schools of acting in the twentieth century and constitutes an innovation in the art of acting whose impact is felt to the present day, with Hoffmann being just one of many celebrated actors who have been trained according to its principles. Method Acting attempts to create the appearance of affect by cultivating similar emotional states in the person of the actor as portrayed in the character. While

[1] "Method of Madness: Why Do Actors Insist on Method Acting?," *FirstShowing.net*, accessed November 4, 2015, http://www.firstshowing.net/2010/method-of-madness-why-do-actors-insist-on-method-acting/.

Hoffman does not fully identify with his character, he does place himself in comparable situations in order to invoke the desired physiological response in his body. Conversely, Olivier demands absolute control over his performance and is unwilling to relinquish sovereignty over his person for the sake of appearing emotionally charged.

The opposition between Hoffman and Olivier's acting practices is a part of a rich acting tradition that spans both film and the theater and features one of the most enduring debates in acting discourse: the question of the actor's emotional commitment to the role. Stanislavski's championing of the emotionalist position represents a twentieth-century manifestation of a centuries long debate. Shortly before Stanislavski in the late nineteenth century, the acting world was rocked by an international controversy in which the acting theorists Constant Coquelin, Henry Irving, Fleeming Jenkin, and William Archer hotly contested the dilemma: "Do actor's feel? and ought they feel?"[2] Many of the terms of the debate are virtually unchanged from when it first rose to prominence in the eighteenth century among the likes of Denis Diderot and Gotthold Ephraim Lessing.

There is a deeper underlying issue at stake in this discussion, as an actor who strives to assume the emotional state of the character he portrays does not do so for its own sake. The emotional state of the actor conceals itself from the audience and is only relevant insofar as it manifests as expression in the body. The audience then reads the corporeal expressions as signs of the emotional state of the character the actor is portraying. Corporeal expressions require a corresponding emotional state because they evade deliberate attempts at creation. They occur spontaneously, being dependent on the emotional state of the actor rather than on intentionality. This tension between mind and body is particularly acute for the theater, a medium specifically

[2]Toby Cole and Helen Krich Chinoy, *Actors on Acting; the Theories, Techniques, and Practices of the Great Actors of All Times as Told in Their Own Words.*, New rev. ed. (Crown Publishers, 1970), 363.

dedicated to the representation of human interaction. For instance, on the stage an actor might try to produce the appearance of anger by banging his fist on a table, but the redness of the face associated with anger flouts intentionality, since its cause lies in automatic mechanisms in the body that are independent from the will. An ideal actor would be one who is capable of achieving the elusive goal of freely and intentionally depicting spontaneous corporeal expressions on the stage. Thus the unacknowledged core of the debate revolves around a single issue: to what extent is it possible to stage spontaneity?

Most theorists who engaged in this debate have come down on one of two sides represented by Hoffman and Olivier. Either they have been dazzled by the allure of realistic-appearing affective expressions, and are accordingly willing to surrender to the spontaneity of their bodies, or they are worried about losing the precision and control required for acting if they were to become emotionally afflicted and thus reject the threat corporeal spontaneity represents. The great innovation of Stanislavski's system, as the *Marathon Man* anecdote illustrates, is that it provides a guide for how to come to terms with the spontaneity of the body. As the human body can produce numerous forms of expression, many of which readily resist reproduction, it is the task of actors to actualize the desired potential of their bodies by placing themselves in situations that will trigger it. The utter desperation that Hoffman sought to convey with his appearance highlights the ways in which the human body operates spontaneously by means of automatic mechanisms. Method Acting recognizes that the body's spontaneity can be harnessed for theatrical endeavors through indirect means.

The actors and theorists of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century German theater were just as divided as Hoffman and Olivier on the mechanisms by which spontaneous corporeal expressions could be convincingly staged. This dissertation will explore the presence of the

notion of corporeal spontaneity in German acting discourse from 1750 to the first decades of the nineteenth century. On the one hand, this spontaneity was viewed as an undeniable resource for the theater that could provide actors with the means to produce otherwise inimitable corporeal expressions. On the other hand, by providing unreliable elements corporeal spontaneity also threatens the precision required for the construction of the work of art. In constructing their theatrical and aesthetic paradigms, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, Friedrich von Schiller, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, and Heinrich von Kleist had to come to terms with the body's autonomy, and each dramatist responded to it uniquely. In the process of responding to corporeal spontaneity, these thinkers drew from other discourses such as the mind–body dilemma, aesthetic autonomy, semiotics, the moral edification of the acting profession, and the relationship between art and nature. One of the aims of this dissertation is to demonstrate how the spontaneity of the actor's body cannot be separated from these discourses.

The Emergence of the Natural Acting Paradigm

While the discourse on the corporeal spontaneity of the actor has a long tradition, it is short when compared to the history of acting in general. Before the eighteenth century we find few references as to whether actors should feel what they are acting. It only becomes a major topic in acting discourse with the emergence of a new theatrical style around 1750 that privileges the strict verisimilitude of a performance, which I will term the natural acting paradigm.[3] Each of the thinkers examined in this dissertation are responding to the natural acting paradigm, whether

[3]There appears to be little agreement on how to designate this new theatrical aesthetic, with scholars referring to it as natural and realistic acting practices or some variation of this. For the sake of consistency, I am employing the term "natural acting paradigm" to describe this aesthetic tendency. It groups together disparate thinkers who sometimes disagree as to the extent that the appearance of "nature" should be the aim of the stage, but who reject symbolic and idealistic modes of acting.

they are seeking to define and expand its framework, best seen in Lessing, or developing counter models of the theater that aim to repudiate it, as in the case of Goethe.

Theorists of the theater in Western Europe have debated the theater's relationship with reality since the Renaissance.[4] Although the variations of this debate are numerous, for the sake of brevity they can be reduced to two issues. The first issue asks whether the aim of the theater is to delight or morally edify the audience, or some combination of the two. The second asks whether verisimilitude or poetic license is the best means of achieving these aims. The three neo-classical unities, time, place, and action, are also based in verisimilitude, in that the limitations of the performance of a play should correspond to its plot as closely as possible. Corneille in the *Le Cid* controversy was famously charged with violating verisimilitude by unbelievably depicting too many historical actions within a single day. John Dryden and Robert Howard in late seventeenth century England and Voltaire and La Motte in early eighteenth century France debated the use of poetry versus prose in drama on the basis of its verisimilitude.[5] Gottsched in the German theatrical tradition insisted on verisimilitude to the extent that he deplored opera, on the basis that no one sings in such a manner in reality.[6]

The art of the actor does not begin to be taken seriously until the second half of the seventeenth century, and even then the major players in the debate of theatrical verisimilitude often disregarded specificities of acting in favor of other issues pertaining to the form and content of drama. Despite this verisimilitude still remained an issue for the few that did address the topic, as demonstrated by Franciscus Lang, a Jesuit priest and theorist of acting practices in

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[4]It goes without saying that these issues were already present in antiquity in Plato and Aristotle's writings. Yet it is only in the Renaissance that verisimilitude became a fixed and central feature of the discourse on the theater.

[5]For an account of these, see chapters eight, nine, and ten in Marvin Carlson, *Theories of the Theatre : A Historical and Critical Survey from the Greeks to the Present*, Expanded ed. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993).

[6]Johann Christian Gottsched, *Schriften zur Literatur* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1972), 172.

late seventeenth-century Bavaria. His *Dissertatio de actione scenica* best represents the conventional baroque conception of acting and provides a practical instructional guide on the appropriate bodily stances for the theater; it does so by distancing itself from what he regarded as the natural body and proposing that ideal acting practices were rule-based. Rather than appealing to a sense of conformity with nature, he regarded the inherent capacities of the body as "noch roh und ungepflegt" necessitating that "sie durch die Kunst verfeinert und zur Eleganz ausgebildet werden, damit sie ihren Zweck sicherer erreiche."[7] Lang as a result identifies in his treatise the ideal corporeal stances for the stage, such as the *crux scenica*, that appear far removed from the contemporary notion of naturally occurring bodily gestures. As stilted and artificial as these acting practices would appear to the theatergoer in the late eighteenth century, at the time they were not viewed as violating verisimilitude. With the vast majority of Baroque plays depicting a courtly culture, acting practices also required operating under the same principles of decorum, equanimity, and regularity. This is particularly dominant in some parts of Lang's treatise, as certain bodily stances and gestures such as balled fists were rejected as too reminiscent of peasants.[8]

By the mid eighteenth century the debate about verisimilitude and the theater began to shift. Domestic tragedies introduced the bourgeois family as an appropriate subject of drama, in response to demographic changes in the audience that moved its interest away from the traditional subjects such as the fate of kings. Prose dramas, which had before been merely topics of discussion, were more frequently becoming the norm.[9] Yet it was not just the form of

[7]Franciscus Lang and Alexander Rudin, *Abhandlung über die Schauspielkunst* (Bern; München: Francke, 1975), 166.

[8]Lang and Rudin, *Abhandlung über die Schauspielkunst*, 185.

[9]The resistance to prose dramas was partially out of practical considerations: actors at the time had virtually no training in declaiming prose.

language on the stage that changed. The baroque acting style championed by Lang slowly lost its grip on many European theaters in favor of one that that claimed to possess greater verisimilitude: the natural acting paradigm.

The origins of the natural acting paradigm remain unclear. Often this change in acting practices is ascribed to a larger European trend around the mid eighteenth century, in which actors, dramaturges, and theater critics began to turn away from what they considered to be stilted Baroque gestures in favor of a realistic or natural theatrical expression.[10] The turn to "nature" has been ascribed to the declining influence of the rationalism of Leibniz and Wolff and the rise of English empiricism: once perception and the senses became a fashionable source of knowledge, the role of the body and the apparatus of the senses took on a new role in the theater.[11] Yet this movement was not limited to empiricists. Gottsched, who is usually associated with the rationalist tradition, also favored a more naturalistic conception of acting practices.[12] Regardless of its origins, the conventions of the theater increasingly embraced the notion of "nature" and reproducing gestures on the stage that imitated everyday life. It is important to note that the shift to natural acting methods was not restricted to the staging of drama. By the second half of the eighteenth century opera composer Christoph Willibald Gluck and ballet theorist and practitioner Jean-Georges Noverres also pushed for natural gestures in the performers of their respective spheres.

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[10]My brief summary here brushes over many of the complexities involved in the shift from Baroque acting practices to the theatrical Rationalism embodied by Gottsched to the natural expressions by Lessing's time. For an in depth account of this transition in Germany, see Erika Fischer-Lichte's *The Semiotics of the Theater* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press 1992), 143-170.

[11]See also Erika Fischer-Lichte, "Entwicklung einer neuen Schauspielkunst,“ in *Schauspielkunst im 18. Jahrhundert. Grundlagen – Praxis – Authoren*, ed. Wolfgang Bender (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1992), 54.

[12]Gottsched, *Schriften zur Literatur*, 170-75.

Perhaps nowhere is there a more unambiguous declaration of the aims of the natural acting paradigm than Conrad Ekhof's programmatic definition of the art of acting from his actor's academy in 1753: "Die Schauspielkunst ist: durch Kunst der Natur nachahmen, und ihr so nahe kommen, daß Wahrscheinlichkeiten für Wahrheiten angenommen werden müssen oder geschehene Dinge so natürlich wieder vorstellen, als wenn sie jetzt erst geschehen."[13] Ekhof's statement demonstrates the core assumptions of the natural acting paradigm. First, the theater should strive for the aesthetics of illusion, creating the appearance of reality on the stage. The notion of a theatrical illusion does not aim to deceive audiences, as will be claimed by opponents of the natural acting paradigm for much of its subsequent history.[14] Rather its status as an "illusion" indicates its dedication to mimesis, with a theatrical performance imitating reality to the extent that its staged nature is no longer dominant for the audience (in contrast to Baroque acting). Second, in the act of striving to produce the appearance of "nature" on the stage, the natural acting paradigm conceives of itself in paradoxical terms—employing art to erase its own artfulness and thus to create the appearance of "nature." Lessing, Schiller, and Goethe, as well as many of their contemporaries, will debate the extent to which staging "nature" is an aspiration of the theater.

Corporeal Spontaneity

In the quest to depict "nature" on the stage, as reflected in Ekhof's sentiment, theorists and practitioners of the theater discovered that representing unintentional aspects of the body, namely affects, tested the limits of what can be represented. The issue becomes much more acute with the recognition that much of the human body operates spontaneously in its own right,

[13]Heinz Kindermann, *Conrad Ekhofs Schauspieler-Akademie* (Vienna: Rudolf M. Rohrer, 1955), 17.

[14]This tendency will be discussed in the second and third chapters in relation to Schiller and Goethe.

consisting of a multitude of automatic processes that defy intentionality, which I have termed corporeal spontaneity.[15] For a theater that aims to represent "nature" on the stage, this would constitute a significant limitation on representation, although these limitations are implicated in why affects are so desirable for the stage. Affects for the natural acting paradigm are not merely one of many forms of bodily expression. Rather, they were regarded as perhaps its highest form of expression, because they are so difficult to stage. Spontaneous expressions such as crying and blushing that appear incapable of staging divert attention from the artfulness of a theatrical performance, transforming it, to use Goethe's language, into a *Naturwerk* instead of a *Kunstwerk*. Affects effectively erase the artfulness of theatrical production like no other expression because they ostensibly only occur spontaneously in nature.

When discussing the spontaneity of the human body, a duality quickly manifests. The assumption of free will, which most thinkers in the eighteenth century ascribed to, designates an autonomous space where human beings can act as a cause, rather than as an effect, in a sequence of events. Yet the very act of postulating the free will necessitates at the same time the autonomy of an outside world that is not subject to the domain of free will. Just as a human being can act spontaneously without regard to the autonomous world around him, so can the world act spontaneously without regard to the human will. The notion of spontaneity thus requires two realms. The realm beyond the will not only pertains to the objects of the outside world, but also to many elements of the human body, which as previously mentioned, operates automatically without regard to the will.

[15]I am employing the term corporeal spontaneity instead of affect, since, as will become apparent in the chapters on Schiller and Goethe's theatrical aesthetics, the issues of representing spontaneity and the body exceed the domain of affects. That being said, the natural acting paradigm was primarily concerned with affects and thus I will be treating the topic of affects heavily in this dissertation. To clarify, corporeal spontaneity encompasses all aspects of the body that are not subject to intentionality, with affects being the major manifestation of this.

Many of these observations can be found in the discourse on the topic of affect since the Stoics. For much of its discursive history affects were viewed as a negative aspect of human existence that delimits the exercise of the will. To contextualize what the innovations of the natural acting paradigm brought to bear on the question of affect, I will briefly delve into two Early Modern philosophers, Descartes and Spinoza, who extensively theorized the relationship between affect and intentionality.

For Descartes, affects or the passions represent a problem for humans because they impose a restriction on volition. "Our passion," he asserts, "cannot be directly excited or displaced by the action of our will."[16] This inevitably results in a split subject who is at the mercy of his own passions. As Descartes observes, the will cannot directly challenge the passion, but consciousness can indirectly displace it by searching for reasons contrary to that passion. Descartes gives the example of someone who is afraid to fight and wishes to flee. His mind can think of reasons that are associated with a lack of danger, which then calm his passions. Thus knowledge of the passions provides an effective counter. It is the search for knowledge about the nature of the passions that explains his ultimate project of the vast categorization of various passions, with each passion being defined according to its internal and external effects.

Descartes notices, however, that in some cases even the faculties of the mind are fruitless against the autonomy of the body. He gives the example of two friends play-fighting, with one attempting to strike the other in the face. The other friend knows that his companion is not being serious and does not intend to actually hit him, but despite this knowledge his eyes still close as the fist of his friend approaches his face.[17] In this case the intentionality does not come into consideration, and there are some automatic responses of the body as a machine. Descartes is

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[16]Descartes, *The Passions of the Soul* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1989), 43.

[17]Descartes, *The Passions of the Soul*, 26.

briefly troubled with human mechanical nature and he abandons the issue after only a cursory treatment of it.

In the decades following Descartes, Spinoza devoted himself to many of these same issues, although he reaches different conclusions. While Descartes claims that we cannot truly know the causes of our affects, Spinoza on the other hand asserts that such knowledge is possible, to the extent that he places knowledge of the cause of our affects at the pinnacle of his ethics. In his *Ethics* Spinoza defines the passions as a “privation of knowledge.”[18] Spinoza then goes beyond Descartes and makes a distinction between affect and the passions, arguing that “an affect which is a passion ceases to be a passion as soon as we form a clear and distinct idea of it.”[19] This distinction is essential because possessing clear and distinct knowledge of affects is the only viable option for human subjects to exert their volition in regard to the body’s spontaneity. Spinoza gives the example of the man who has lost something good, but recognizes its cause (that this good was impossible to keep) and therefore mitigates his sadness.[20] Interestingly, Spinoza critiques Descartes for claiming that the mind can always directly control the body. Spinoza points out that the body has some automatic processes, such as pupil dilation. Human subjects only possess indirect control over the process of dilation, which entails looking at objects of various distances, since we can control the motion of our eyes.[21] This critique is unfounded, since as I have pointed out, Descartes admits the human body operates to some degree spontaneously.

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[18]Spinoza, *The Spinoza Reader* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 255.

[19]Spinoza, *The Spinoza Reader*, 247.

[20]Ibid., 249.

[21]Ibid., 245.

Much of this affective discourse consists of developing strategies to mitigate the impediments that affects exert on entities with free will. With the advent of the natural acting paradigm in the mid eighteenth century, theorists of the theater asked a different question: how can an actor exhibit affective expressions when they can only occur spontaneously? The fundamental question concerning affects shifted from how to contain them, to how to produce them and exploit their aesthetic value for the theater.

Methodological Approach and Research Overview

Investigating acting styles presents at least one major methodological problem: its ephemeral nature. Acting leaves no trace of itself other than in literary, video, photographic, and other artistic representations of theater performances, each of which provide their own differences from the original instance of acting. I am largely circumventing this issue by examining the literary reception of acting practices: in what ways did theorists and practitioners conceptualize acting practices in terms of the actor's body; what models did they rely on and how did they synthesize multiple discourses to produce their notion of the ideal actor. Theorizing the actor, however, does not confine itself to essays, treatises, and other works of non-fiction. All of the thinkers examined in this dissertation were also prolific writers of fiction and included acting dilemmas in their dramas and novels. In all cases, the fictional instantiation of acting issues never merely illustrates their approaches from their theoretical works, but rather expands, complicates, and even problematizes those same works.

The contribution of this dissertation lies in revealing the ways in which theorists of the stage during this period conceptualize the duality of human beings—beings who possess free will and at the same time are subject to corporeal forces beyond their control—and come to

terms with this duality in specific aesthetic demands of the theater. This topic often manifests in scholarly literature in the debate of the emotionalist and anti-emotionalist positions of the art of acting.[22] Yet as previously mentioned, this dilemma sidesteps a more fundamental issue: the extent to which the body's autonomy is at odds with intentionality. Scholars have treated questions such as an actor's affective state, the depiction of grace, and aesthetic autonomy separately from how corporeal spontaneity informs and complicates them. All are attempts to reconcile the advantages and perils of using human beings as a medium for art by exploring the issues that the spontaneity of their bodies presents for the stage.

This dissertation synthesizes various aspects of acting discourse, and reveals resemblances to justify how these disparate texts are responding to the issue of corporeal spontaneity in the theater. This has the effect of creating a new narrative where only varying accounts existed before. As a result, most of the interaction with my interlocutors will be reserved for subsequent chapters, since I am not so much dislodging older macro-narratives but rather demonstrating how various accounts are responding to the same problem. That being said, this dissertation would not have been possible if it were not for the work of many theater scholars who have written on the topic of corporeal spontaneity (although without referring to it as such) in the theater. As my approach begins with the body of the actor, this dissertation continues work on the anthropological assumptions of the theater that scholars have grappled with over the past two decades. Wolfgang F. Bender in his *Schauspielkunst im 18. Jahrhundert – Grundlage, Praxis, Autoren* was one of the first to pose the question of how theorists and practitioners of the eighteenth-century theater conceptualized the relationship between the theater

[22]This distinction will be elaborated in the first chapter on Lessing, since it is to his dramaturgy that it is most pertinent.

and the actor's psychological state.[23] Although Bender admits that his volume hardly provides a satisfactory account of this and more research was required, bringing an actor's psychological state to the forefront is the first step in highlighting the distinction between intended and unintended bodily movements and the paradox of producing unintended movements on the stage.

Alexander Košenina took up Bender's call for more scholarly research in this area with his *Anthropologie und Schauspielkunst.*[24] Much of Košenina's research coincides with my own, namely his outlining of how various thinkers in the eighteenth century conceived of the correspondence between body and soul and its relationship to acting and dissimulation. Košenina is perhaps one of the first to synthesize some of the main issues at stake in regard to corporeal control in the theater, and my dissertation elaborates on many of his observations. Where Košenina takes a broad perspective, providing numerous useful accounts on the body-soul problem and the theater, my approach focuses on four thinkers from the same time period and reveals how this a part of a larger issue of rendering actors' bodies compatible with the aesthetics of the stage.

Another significant influence on this dissertation is a work that only tangentially addresses the theater. Michael Fried in his *Absorption and Theatricality: Painting and Beholder in the Age of Diderot* demonstrates how French Neoclassical painting denies the presence of the beholder by depicting states of absorption. Fried contrasts depictions of states of absorptions with theatricality, the acknowledgement of the beholder in the work of art.[25] Although Fried

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[23]Wolfgang Bender, *Schauspielkunst Im 18. Jahrhundert : Grundlagen, Praxis, Autoren* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1992), 10.

[24]Alexander Košenina, *Anthropologie und Schauspielkunst: Studien zur "eloquentia corporis" im 18. Jahrhundert* (Tübingen: M. Niemeyer, 1995).

[25]Michael Fried, *Absorption and Theatricality : Painting and Beholder in the Age of Diderot* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980).

largely confines his analysis to eighteenth century French painting, his notion of absorption follows the same reasoning as spontaneity, in that both are implicated in fourth wall aesthetics of denying the presence of the audience. The notion of the fourth wall asserts the autonomy of the stage and adheres to the maxim that the best way to affect the audience is to ignore them. In painting this takes place with states of absorption, in which the depicted person is enraptured in a task or activity that diverts attention away from the fact that they are on exhibition. Fried's thesis can thus apply to the theater and helps reveal how some thinkers sought to overcome the daunting paradox of mastering bodily autonomous aspects. To produce spontaneous-appearing gestures is to deny their contrived status, to favor the autonomy of absorption over theatricality. What greater sign exists of the anti-theatricality of a performance than to produce the appearance of affects on the stage, an expression whose cause lies outside of intentionality?

Outline of Dissertation

My dissertation takes as its starting point Lessing's synthesis of Riccoboni's anti-emotionalist and de Sainte Albine's emotionalist actor for its first chapter, which I situate in relation to his anthropological interest in *kitzeln* as part of his larger project to induce an affective expression. Lessing develops a theory of inducing affective expression that utilizes the actor's body to mediate between intentionality and spontaneity. Lessing augments this theory to include not only the relationship between the actor and his own autonomous body, but also the ways that poets can intervene in an actor's affective expression, which in turn reveals extensive interaction between his theories of acting and his theory of media and semiotics in *Laokoon*. Actors create mental images of bodies through poetic language that in turn are integrated into their own affective and bodily motions, thus artificially producing the impression of spontaneous action on

stage. His domestic tragedy *Miss Sara Sampson* displays the other half of the dilemma of corporeal spontaneity on the stage—the questions of not only how to produce, but also how to contain affective expressions. For the character Marwood, corporeal spontaneity is the greatest obstacle to her plans for revenge, revealing her internal state at inconvenient times. Marwood's attempt to diminish her body's autonomy involves assuming the subjectivity of an actress and director: by transforming her environment into a script, she renders events predictable and thus mitigates the chances of a spontaneous affect.

My second chapter begins by situating the notion of staging affects in the early Schiller in relation to Lessing's. In contrast to Lessing, Schiller views the harmony between interior state and corporeal expression as the greatest obstacle to overcoming the paradox of intending affects, which leads him to the phenomena of sleepwalking. For Schiller, sleepwalking posits a breakdown between soul and body, which provides a place to theorize about the possibility of producing affective expression without a corresponding affective state. His novel *Der Geisterseher* problematizes this skill of the actor by showing what happens when an actor's ability to dissimulate spontaneity is extrapolated on an extra-theatrical setting. Schiller furthers his examination of corporeal spontaneity and the theater in two of his aesthetic works—"Kalliasbriefe" and *Über Anmut und Würde*. In the process of breaking away from the natural acting paradigm, in the "Kalliasbriefe" Schiller integrates the notion of spontaneity into his concept of beauty, in which beauty appears as "Freiheit in der Erscheinung" or the appearance of spontaneity, which forms the foundation of his depiction of actors in the same text. By relegating beauty to the realm of appearances, Schiller is able to avoid issues of dissimulation that emerged in *Der Geisterseher*. In *Anmut und Würde*, his notion of the inherent disharmony of acting

threatens his concept of grace, which requires the correspondence between external expression and internal state. As a result, Schiller is forced to dismiss the possibility of the graceful actor.

In contrast to Lessing and the early Schiller, Goethe believes that utilizing an actor's corporeal spontaneity does not enhance a performance. Instead, it creates an autonomous and thus disharmonious space within the work of art. Goethe's theatrical project reveals a conflict between the concept of aesthetic autonomy and the theatrical utilization of autonomous human beings as an artistic medium. Elaborating on some of Schiller's work, Goethe expands the notion of corporeal spontaneity from simply the emotionality of the actor to all perceptible qualities of the actor's person that are inconsistent with the character he is playing. As a result, in his "Regeln für Schauspieler" Goethe institutes strict and largely bodily prescriptions that strive to remove all unintended traces of reality from the work of art. Attempts to control actors' bodies are further attested to in his use of masks, which not only extract the idiosyncrasies of the actor's person in favor of a higher ideal, but also negate an actor's use of affective expressions. In his novel *Die Wahlverwandtschaften*, Goethe instantiates the struggle between director and spontaneous actor in the tableaux vivants scenes. Given the task of containing the intractable character Luciane for an art that requires absolute discipline, the architect contains her by breaking with Goethe's prescription against turning an actor's back away from the audience and absorbing her in the work of art. When Ottilie performs, her affective expression threatens to undermine the entire performance.

Kleist enters the discourse on corporeal spontaneity by establishing it as a solution to an intrinsic human failing. I read "Über das Marionettentheater" as a text that demonstrates the issues that reflection and consciousness present for the body. Each of his three anecdotes illustrates a limitation that intentionality imposes on the body—from the dancer who is unable to

reproduce the graceful appearance of marionettes, to the *Dornauszieher* who is unable to recreate his incidental graceful appearance, to the dancer who is unable to feign the trusts of his rapier to fool a bear. This failing is to be understood as a mimetic one in which the intentional recreation of an act of the body is never able to achieve the perfection of the original. Kleist satirizes the attempts to create perfect bodily imitations—to some extent the goal of the natural acting paradigm—in his *Amphitryon*, which depicts perfect beings imitating imperfect ones, which inevitably results in imperfect copies. In light of this corporeal limitation, Kleist turns towards spontaneity in two other texts—“Von der Überlegung” and “Über die allmähliche Verfertigung der Gedanken beim Reden,” in which the human body’s ability to react without prior thought can accomplish otherwise elusive physical and mental tasks.

Chapter One

Mediated Movements: Spontaneity, Gesture, and Lessing's Theories of Acting

In eines Schauspielers Stammbuch

Kunst und Natur
Sein auf der Bühne nur;
Wenn Kunst sich in Natur verwandelt,
Dann hat Natur mit Kunst gehandelt.
– Gotthold Ephraim Lessing

August 1757 was a busy month of correspondence between Gotthold Ephraim Lessing and Moses Mendelssohn. In these letters the two friends debated highbrow topics ranging from the nature of the sublime and criticism of contemporary fables, to Mendelssohn's less than warm review of Klopstock's *Der Tod Adams*. This lofty engagement did not exclude more practical matters equally familiar to academics such as the concerns about meeting publication deadlines and Lessing's inveterate requests for money from Mendelssohn to support himself. Yet both managed to find time to have a serious exchange on an issue that at first glance appears by comparison quite frivolous: tickling. Responding to an earlier discussion, on August 11 Mendelssohn recommended that Lessing consult several passages from Spinoza's *Ethics* on the Latin word *titillatio*, which Mendelssohn understood as *kitzeln* or tickling.[26] Mendelssohn reproduced the passages in his letter, but barely touched on their relevance other than his belief that they would please Lessing in addition to his astonishment at Christian Wolff and Alexander

[26]Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Werke und Briefe in zwölf Bänden*, *Bd. 11 pt.1* (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1985), 234-35. All subsuqent references to Lessing with refer to this edition.

Baumgarten's neglect of the question of affects.[27] In his responding letter, Lessing took issue with Mendelssohn's translation of *titillatio*. *Titillatio*, Lessing claims, does not refer only to *kitzeln* but rather "alles, was dem 'dolor' entgegen gesetzt wird," namely pleasure in general, a mistranslation he attributes to the "Armut der lateinischen Sprache."[28] Since *titillatio* doesn't necessarily result in laughter, whereas *kitzeln* must, Lessing remained unconvinced of Spinoza's relevance to the issue. Worried that he did not express himself properly, Mendelssohn explained that Spinoza's *titillatio* has some affinities with Lessing's definition of *kitzeln*, in that both begin as a pleasant feeling that has the potential to become excessive and produce an unpleasant feeling. Lessing finally admitted that his good friend had a point and let the matter rest.[29]

Why would *kitzeln* interest Lessing and Mendelssohn to the extent that it warranted multiple exchanges between them, including on one occasion a letter solely dedicated to the matter? Their analysis of tickling is restricted largely to semantics and is viewed in terms of Mendelssohn's theory of mixed sentiments, but the larger significance is not readily obvious within the correspondences themselves. The original prompt for the discussion was written nine months previously in another epistolary correspondence between Lessing, Mendelssohn, and Friedrich Nicolai known collectively as the *Briefwechsel über das Trauerspiel*. In their discussion of *Mitleid* or pity, the topic of laughter emerged out of a debate on crying, since the two expressions occasionally overlap with the creation of tears.[30] Mendelssohn's return to the topic months later serves as a continuation of the discussion of the necessary factors capable of

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[27]For a general discussion of Lessing and Mendelssohn's engagement with Spinoza's notion of affect, see Willi Goetschel *Spinoza's Modernity: Mendelssohn, Lessing, Heine* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004), 85-118. Goetschel unfortunately does not address the tickling episode.

[28]Lessing, *Werke und Briefe*, *Bd. 11 pt.1,* 241.

[29]The entire exchange on tickling can be found on pages 231-246 of *Werke und Briefe, Bd. 11, pt.1*.

[30]Lessing, *Werke und Briefe*, *Bd. 3*, 674.

producing desired affective responses in an audience.

Presenting tickling as an exploration of affected audiences, however, doesn't exhaust its significance, and I argue that the immediate context for the conversation more fully illuminates some of the other issues at play. The references to tickling appear in the midst of a larger discussion of declamatory passages of Lessing's bourgeois tragedy *Miss Sara Sampson* and of the problem of inducing affective expression in actors.[31] Since an immediate and coherent connection between tickling and acting practices is not self-evident, I will underscore the general features of tickling that reveal it as a kind of curiosity in relation to affect and human anthropology. Quoting Lessing from a previous conversation, Mendelssohn writes "Wir lachen, wenn uns ein anderer kitzeln, weil wir nicht wissen [...], ob er nicht die Schranken des Angenehmen überschreiten werde."[32] This quotation shows that tickling requires at least two people: one who is being tickled and the one doing the tickling. In one of the bizarre quirks of human physiology, no one can tickle himself, because, according to Lessing, his own intention to tickle is transparent to him, while it is possible with another person because he lacks the direct access to the will of the tickler; tickling thus relies on a degree of ignorance and autonomy. In this sense tickling is not only a particular kind of physical stimulus, but the subject's relation to the origin of that stimulus, which must come from another subject whose autonomy prevents him from knowing the course the tickling will take. In addition, tickling, or as Mendelssohn occasionally refers to it as, "das mechanische Lachen," produces a kind of laughter for which there is no object: nothing is actually funny, rather an affective expression surfaces that gives the

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[31]Lessing, *Werke und Briefe, Bd. 11, pt.1*, 233-235. It is inconclusive whether Mendelssohn mentions Spinoza in connection with his objection of declamation in *Miss Sara Sampson* or if it merely follows it as a new topic. In either case, however, the context remains the same.

[32]Ibid., 234-235.

impression that something is funny.[33] Finally, once again as "mechanisches Lachen," tickling is the cause of an affective response, laughter, which can be produced intentionally, unlike more conventional instances of laughter, which emerge spontaneously through human interaction. Paradoxically, tickling represents the controlled release of a spontaneous reaction of the body, the induction of an affect that could not otherwise be intended.

Lessing's interest in tickling, I argue, has little to do directly with arousing particular affects in the *audience*, but rather the appearance of affect in *actors*. Tickling is a distinct example of the "mechanical" creation of a corporeal expression, since it universally triggers an affective response in the body.[34] Tickling not only causes laughter when nothing is funny, but it also reliably creates a credible appearance of laughter that is superior to any deliberate attempts to feign the affect. This isn't to claim that Lessing is proposing the tickling of actors on stage. Tickling is rather a small part of Lessing's larger anthropological foray into the spontaneous processes of the body;[35] it helps construe not only his view on the body and affect, but also how affect can be actively employed on the stage under the natural acting paradigm prevalent after the middle of the eighteenth century. Thus to understand what tickling represents for Lessing is at the same time to begin to understand his notion of the ideal actor.

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[33]This general observation on tickling demonstrates the fundamental difference between tickling and Lessing's theory of laughter as presented in *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*. In the 29th *Stück* Lessing asserts that laughter has its uses, namely "in der Übung unserer Fähigkeit das Lächerliche zu bemerken" (*Werke und Briefe, Bd. 6*, 323). If laughter helps to identify the ridiculous, Lessing's theory could only function in a context where there is an object for the laughter, the kind the stage provides for the audience. Since tickling produces laughter without an object, it wouldn't hone the ability to identify the ridiculous and doesn't appear applicable in the context of audience affects.

[34]I use the term expression here in both the visual and the auditory sense. Lessing is primarily interested in the visual components of acting, gestures, but he does acknowledge the importance of *Ton* for an actor's stage presence, as found in his discussion of an actor's capability to produce on stage the scream of Philoctetes in the fourth chapter of *Laokoon*. Lessing remains skeptical whether contemporary German actors could produce realistic enough screams that "bis zur Illusion bringen könne." David Garrick is singled out as perhaps the only actor in Lessing's time capable performing such a task, although even he might not be able to match the theatrical skills possessed by the ancients required for Philoctetes' scream. *Werke und Briefe, Bd. 5, part 2*, 47-48.

[35]For a detailed overview of intellectual tradition concerning the intersections between anthropology and the theater, see Alexander Košenina's *Anthropology und Schauspielkunst*.

In this chapter I will demonstrate how Lessing circumvents and exploits the limitations that corporeal spontaneity imposes upon his notion of acting. As demonstrated with the example of tickling, the body has spontaneous mechanisms built into it, such as affect, which cannot be intended directly, but can be indirectly activated. Though these spontaneous expressions were highly valued by the natural acting paradigm prevalent in the second half of the eighteenth century, they resist intentional utilization. By developing and employing acting techniques whereby the actor's body is used to mediate the relationship between an actor's intentionality and spontaneous expression, Lessing is able to appropriate the elusive spontaneous corporeal signs for the stage. This mediating function not only permits Lessing to circumvent the paradox of staging spontaneity but also enables him to unveil a derivative theory of acting, one that gives the poet a hand in causing spontaneity. In this second version of his theory of acting, the poet replaces the material body as mediator with dematerialized poetic descriptions to create the appearance of spontaneous gestures in actors. The actor no longer relies on the "Modifikationen des Körpers" to produce "Modifikationen der Seele" since the poet can create an ersatz body through language, which can directly affect the soul. Lessing doesn't place the actor as the primary initiator of these automatic processes, but rather the poet, thereby subordinating good acting to poetry. The mediation of the body becomes the mediation of poetry, which reconstitutes the body as a verbal image.

The Body as Mediator in Lessing's Theory of Acting

As previously mentioned, Lessing's dramaturgy is a part of a larger European tendency to demand greater realism in the theater. As a result of the new commitment to theatrical realism, whereby the performance of the stage would attempt to mimic reality, Lessing and many of his

contemporaries sought to construct an "illusion" on the stage. Referring to the actions on the stage as an illusion does not mean that the audience was deceived into believing a performance was real, but rather that a play was more effective in affecting the audience when it appeared *as if* it were real. Thus dramaturgy developed practices that sought to minimize the artifice of a performance by erasing those elements that would draw attention to its theatricality.[36]

In their commitment to a kind of theatrical realism, however, actors and dramaturges discovered that some aspects of reality were more difficult to reproduce on the stage than others. They encountered the problem of intentionally and directly causing affective expressions of the body, the kinds of expressions that only emerge spontaneously through quotidian human interactions as a result of an affective internal state that then expresses itself in the body.[37] Such expressions appear unachievable since they reside beyond the will's direct influence. For instance, a novice actor intentionally representing a state of anger will typically come up short of convincing the audience of its authenticity, since certain characteristics of this affect cannot be intended directly. Although the actor can pound his fist on a table as a sign that he is angry, he cannot so readily create the blush of his cheeks in the same way, as Lessing succinctly expresses in the 56th *Stück* of the *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*: "Kein Schauspieler kann rot werden, wenn er will."[38] The irony, not to mention the difficulty, lies in the fact that these same affective expressions, such as blushing, which resist contrived mimetic recreation, are the most desirable

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[36]As Heitner points out, Lessing wasn't a complete realist, as demonstrated in his dismissal of the excessive historical detail in Wieland's *Lady Johanna Grey*, and favored at times an idealistic imitation that would be in line with Aristotle's notion of the general over the particular. Heitner does acknowledge, however, that gestures on the stage were a vital part of his realist endeavor. See Robert R. Heitner "Real-life or Spectacle? A Conflict in the Eighteenth-Century German Drama" in *PMLA* Vol. 82 No. 7 (Dec 1967), 486-497.

[37]Affective expressions are pathognomic according to the eighteenth century discourse since they are variable based on the state of the soul. This is in contradistinction to physiognomic expressions, which are fixed corporeal expressions of the body. See Giovanni Gurisatti "Die Beredsamkeit des Körpers: Lessing und Lichtenberg über die Physiognomik des Schauspielers" in *Deutsche Vierteljahrschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* Vol. 67 No. 3 (September 1993), 393- 416.

[38]Lessing, *Werke und Briefe, Bd. 6*, 461.

expressions on the stage precisely because of this resistance, since it would represent the appearance of spontaneity and thereby draw attention away from the contrived nature of the theater. The ideal actor can thus appropriate these spontaneous signs, the kind where corporeal autonomy usually trumps intentionality, and can employ them to erase his own artifice on the stage.[39] Like other theorists of the theater of his time, Lessing was puzzled by this paradox and proposed solutions to come to terms with it.[40]

Lessing became acquainted with the problem of spontaneous expression from the earliest moments of his career as the editor of *Beiträge zur Historie und Aufnahme des Theaters* (1750), the first German theater journal, and later the editor of *Theatralische Bibliothek* (1754-1758).[41] For Lessing these journals were a means to deliver to a German reading public the major issues involving European theater, a collection of critiques and translations of both dramas and dramaturgy, which could then be applied to the burgeoning German theater. During his time as an editor, Lessing reviewed and translated two French theorists of the theater, Pierre Rémond de Sainte Albine and Francesco Riccoboni, both of whom represent opposing viewpoints on how actors should best generate natural gestures. Although the influence of Riccoboni and de Sainte

[39]An adherence to realism did not mean for Lessing to depict fully the real world in all its brutality on the stage, and often his realist endeavors would be bound by rules of propriety. The natural acting paradigm was ultimately just another aesthetic standard that wrestled with an adherence to both "truth" and "beauty." For instance, Lessing decried fake blood as too "ekelhaft" to be shown on the stage, which is in line with his aesthetic ideology in the *Laokoon*. See Lessing, *Werke und Briefe, Bd. 6*, 229.

[40]In addition to Sainte Albine and Riccoboni, whose theories of the actor I will take up later in this chapter, the relationship between the actor and his role was a popular topic in the eighteenth century, and was discussed by contemporaries of Lessing such as Denis Diderot, Melchior Freiherr von Grimm, Moses Mendelssohn, and later by Friedrich Schiller and Ludwig Tieck.

[41]For the significance of these within the larger context of eighteenth-century theater journals, see Heßelmann, *Gereinigtes Theater? Dramaturgie und Schauspielkunst im Spiegel deutschsprachiger Theaterperiodika des 18. Jahrhunderts (1750-1800)*, (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2002).

Albine on Lessing has often been attested to,[42] they function as orientation points around whom the stakes for Lessing's own theory of the actor become clear.

Riccoboni represents one side of the spectrum of what is often referred to in German as the *Reflexions*- or *Verstandesschauspieler*. An actor shouldn't feel what he wants to express, because this would rob him of the precise mental and corporeal control that he requires for his performance. An actor who does feel what he wants to express would not only come across as ridiculous, but could also be potentially dangerous. Riccoboni cites the ancient example of an actor playing Orestes who actualized his character's affects and killed someone.[43] Although this anecdote is surely apocryphal, the general thrust of his argument still rings true: as much as we can agree that there are no more convincing affective expressions than those that emerge from true affective states, those same affective states come with their own baggage which impedes good acting. Spontaneity of the body is a liability, an unknown and ungovernable variable that can potentially disrupt the precision demanded in a theatrical production. As Riccoboni points out, there is something unnatural about the theater itself, namely that a whole day's events are compressed into a few hours. Even if an actor could reliably produce affective expression from their corresponding internal states, affect is not equally capable of being shortened and can potentially linger.[44] The best an actor can hope for is a realistic imitation, where the feigned

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[42]Scholarship on Lessing's reception of Sainte-Albine and Riccoboni is indeed vast, and most of it attempts to ascertain to what extent one or the other influenced Lessing. See Hans Oberländer, *Die geistige Entwicklung der deutschen Schauspielkunst im 18. Jahrhundert* (Hamburg und Leipzig: Verlag von Leopold Voß, 1895), 97-110; Otto G. Graff "Lessing and the Art of Acting" in *Papers of the Michigan Academy of Science, Arts, and Letters, Vol. XL* (1955); Wolfgang F. Bender "'Mit Feuer und Kälte' und 'Für die Augen symbolisch': Zur Ästhetik der Schauspielkunst von Lessing bis Goethe" in *Deutsche Vierteljahrschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* Vol. 62 No. 1 (Mar. 1988), 60-98; Jutta Golawski-Braungart "Lessing und Riccoboni: Schauspielkunst und Rollenkonzeption im Trauerspiel 'Miss Sara Sampson'" in *Sprache und Literatur in Wissenschaft und in Unterricht* 75/76 (1995), 184-204; Alexander Košenina, 127-37.

[43]References to Riccoboni are through Lessing's translation from 1750. See *Werke und Briefe, Bd. 1*, 904.

[44]Ibid., 904.

affective expression doesn't match the internal affective state and would at least leave the actor fully in control.[45]

Opposing the Riccoboni model of acting is de Sainte Albine, a proponent of what later in German would be referred to as the *Gefühlschauspieler*. De Sainte Albine claims in his text "Le Comédien" from 1747 that the actor should completely identify with the character he is playing in such a way that the actor actually feels what the depicted character is supposed to be feeling. In this manner, a particular state of the soul directly produces the corresponding signs in the body that are beyond the direct reach of the will. The de Sainte Albine actor practically loses himself in the process of acting, as demonstrated in Lessing's German translation from 1754:

> Wollen tragische Schauspieler uns täuschen, so müssen sie sich selbst täuschen. Sie müssen sich einbilden, das würklich zu seyn, was sie vorstellen, und eine glückliche Raserei muß sie überreden, daß sie selbst diejenigen sind, die man verräth oder verfolgt.[46]

De Sainte Albine's prescription for an actor to deceive himself into a particular affective state rejects Riccoboni's assertion that inducing such a spontaneous state is theatrically unsustainable. Of utmost importance for de Sainte Albine is that the spontaneous signs appear as real as possible, which the actor can best produce if they correspond to actual affects. Captivated by the allure of spontaneous signs yet disappointed by the lack of explanation for how to induce them in the first place, Lessing's chief criticism is that de Sainte Albine's treatise remains incomplete: "Alles dieses sind abgesonderte Begriffe von dem, was er tun soll, aber noch gar keine Vorschriften, wie er es tun soll."[47] Lessing also remarks that this deficiency is one of the reasons he decided not to translate the entire text, but rather to select excerpts. Fortunately where de Sainte Albine provides little elaboration, Lessing feels compelled to inject his own analysis,

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[45]Ibid., 905.

[46]Lessing, *Werke und Briefe, Bd. 3*, 305.

[47]Ibid., 309.

providing us with one of the first glimpses into his general thoughts on acting methods. Citing the need of the audience to see perfect affective expressions, Lessing asserts

> Es ist zwar wahr, dass jeder Mensch ungelernt den Zustand seiner Seele durch Kennzeichen, welche in die Sinne fallen, einigermaßen ausdrücken kann, der eine durch dieses, der andre durch jenes. Allein auf dem Theater will man Gesinnungen und Leidenschaften nicht nur einigermaßen ausgedrückt sehen; nicht nur auf die unvollkommene Weise, wie sie ein einzelner Mensch, wenn er sich wirklich in eben denselben Umständen befände, vor sich ausdrücken würde; sondern man will sie auf die allervollkommenste Art ausgedrückt sehen, so wie sie nicht besser und nicht vollständiger ausgedrückt werden können. [...] wenn der Schauspieler alle äußerliche Kennzeichnen und Merkmale, alle Abänderungen des Körpers, von welchen man aus der Erfahrung gelernt hat, daß sie etwas gewisses ausdrücken, nachzumachen weiß, so wird sich seine Seele durch den Eindruck, der durch die Sinne auf sie geschieht, von selbst in den Stand setzen, der seinen Bewegungen, Stellungen und Tönen gemäß ist. Diese nun auf eine gewisse mechanische Art zu erlernen, auf eine Art aber, die sich auf unwandelbare Regeln gründet, an deren Dasein man durchgängig zweifelt, ist die einzige und wahre Art die Schauspielkunst zu studieren.[48]

What is at stake for Lessing is the quality of the spontaneous expression. While just about everyone can imitate the signs expected from spontaneity, they inevitably come up short compared to the perfection of actual spontaneity. While Riccoboni, de Sainte Albine, and Lessing all subscribe to the theatrical aesthetic that seeks this perfection, they disagree on the most effective methods to realize it. Lessing declares that de Sainte Albine got his methodology backwards. Instead of convincing himself, for instance, to be angry in order to appear angry, an actor works through his own body to initiate an affective expression. In doing so Lessing is proposing a method appropriating the signs of spontaneity and employing them intentionally thereby dispensing with the paradox for how to stage spontaneous corporeal expression. As in the case of tickling, Lessing's method also subjects and masters the soul according to mechanical principles. Perhaps most remarkable is the body's role in mediating this process. Where intentionality's direct influence fails to produce the appearance of spontaneous expressions, it can work indirectly by exerting itself through the body, through which it can trigger the

[48]Ibid., 310.

corresponding affect in the soul, which then immediately and inexorably expresses itself in the body. Although Lessing remained unsatisfied with de Sainte Albine, it is important to see that Sainte Albine's failure provoked Lessing to advance his own theory, which appears more developed later in his letters and in the *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*.

Around this period Lessing began a project by the name of "Der Schauspieler," whose goal was the development of "die Grundsätze der Ganzen Körperlichen Beredsamkeit."[49] Unfortunately "Der Schauspieler" remained the meager outline of an ambitious undertaking, offering only the preliminary titles of the sections and a few sparse notes. Despite its incomplete status, "Der Schauspieler" does provide some helpful guiding principles and terminology for assembling a more vivid image of what was as stake in acting for Lessing. While the vast majority of the outline revolves around "Modifikationen des Körpers,"[50] in the final part of the outline Lessing provides a list of several theses, the last three of which make a crucial division on the spontaneous gestures of actors.

> Diese Modificationes [*sic*] des Körpers überhaupt, sind entweder unmittelbar in unserer Willkür, oder mittelbar.
>
> Die ersten, weil nichts als das Wollen und ein gesunder Körper dazu gehört, können durch eigentliche und hinlängliche Regeln gelernt werden.
>
> Die andern, welche nicht unmittelbar in unsrer Willkür sind, setzen eine gewisse Beschaffenheit der Seele voraus, auf welche sie von selbst erfolgen, ohne daß wir eigentlich wissen, wie?[51]

Corporeal expressions are either intentional or unintentional. All unintentional expressions are spontaneous, in that they are automatic responses of the body to a stimulus; these would

[49]Exactly when Lessing wrote "Der Schauspieler" remains uncertain. Oberländer places it in 1754, a date largely accepted by Lessing scholarship. See *Die geistige Entwicklung der deutschen Schauspielkunst im 18. Jahrhundert*, 98.

[50]Much of "Der Schauspieler" is particularly indebted to the rhetorical tradition. See Wolfgang Bender "Lessing, Dubos, und rhetorische Tradition" in *Lessing Yearbook/Jahrbuch* (1984), 59.

[51]Lessing, *Werke und Briefe, Bd. 3,* 329.

encompass expressions caused by affective states. The natural acting paradigm's attempts to represent these spontaneous gestures, however, are subject to the control of the will through premeditation, and cannot therefore be considered strictly spontaneous. Yet the methods employed to create of the *appearance* of spontaneity can be either mediated (*mittelbar*) or immediate (*unmittelbar*). As Theodore Ziolkowski correctly points out, the division between immediate and mediated expressions corresponds respectively to the actors of Riccoboni and de Sainte Albine.[52] He speculates that Lessing never finished his "Schauspieler" because in contrast to the rule-based unmediated gestures, mediated gestures emerge spontaneously and cannot be taught, therefore rendering such a didactic project unfeasible. As a result of what he considers Lessing's dismissal of mediated gestures, Ziolkowski regards them as not worthy of serious attention and instead focuses on immediate ones.[53]

In a certain sense, Ziolkowski's analysis gets to the heart of the issue. "Mittelbare Gesten" are spontaneous because they postulates two realms, the intentionality of the actor and the automated processes in his body, whose autonomy effectively prohibit them from acting in a direct causal sequence. While Ziolkowski asserts that Lessing views corporeal autonomy of mediated gestures as an insurmountable limit imposed upon acting, it is clear Lessing does believe in a form of mediation that can bridge the disparate realms of intentionality and body, one that can appropriate the appearance of spontaneity while still maintaining control by the actor. The spontaneity of the body, rather than being an insurmountable obstacle that demarcates the limits of acting, is a potential resource that an actor can draw upon if the appropriate form of

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[52]Theodore Ziolkowski, "Language and Mimetic Action in Lessing's 'Miss Sara Sampson,'" *Germanic Review*, 40:4 (Nov. 1965), 269. Ziolkowski effectively set many of the terms for discussing acting and Lessing by integrating his disparate theoretical texts with his correspondences and his dramas.

[53]Fittingly, Ziolkowski translates "mittelbar" into English as "spontaneous." "Language and Mimetic Action," 268-270.

mediation is employed. Thus Lessing's abrupt ending to "Der Schauspieler" is not necessarily an indication that mediated gestures are beyond the actor's abilities. The actor's ignorance ("ohne daß wir eigentlich wissen, wie?") does not so much refer to an inability to create mediated gestures, but rather human beings' lack of access to the processes that arise from the soul and affect the body. In addition, this passage could easily have been followed with an explanation of how to cause the "gewisse Beschaffenheit der Seele," which is precisely what Lessing did a few years earlier in his commentary on de Sainte Albine. By claiming that some gestures are "nicht unmittelbar," Lessing is setting up the parameters of a problem for which he can provide the solution.[54]

After his work with the journals, Lessing took a hiatus from his publications on the theater and concentrated more on issues concerning art and aesthetics, most notably on his *Laokoon*. By 1767 he returned to the theater and was employed as the house critic in the newly established Hamburg National Theater. One would expect that his *Hamburgische Dramaturgie* would approach acting head on, but only a few of its over 100 *Stücke* elaborate on its theoretical components.[55] The initial sections, however, do provide a substantial account of thoughts and prescriptions on acting. The 3rd *Stück* of *Hamburgische Dramaturgie* expands upon where Lessing left off over a decade before in his translation and commentary of de Sainte Albine. Lessing begins with his own astonishment at the mastery of the renowned eighteenth century

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[54]Lessing's differentiation between immediate and mediated gestures has found little substantial treatment in the scholarship. In addition to Ziolkowski, Peter Michelsen briefly mentions them, as well as his skepticism as to whether Lessing's method actually works. Jutta Golawski-Braungart unfortunately confuses the two in her analysis. See Michelsen, *Der unruhige Bürger: Studien zu Lessing und zur Literatur des achtzehnten Jahrhunderts* (Würzburg, Königshausen & Neumann, 1990) 186-88; "Lessing and Riccoboni: Schauspielkunst und Rollenkonzeption im Trauerspiel 'Miss Sara Sampson'" in *Sprache und Literatur in Wissenschaft und in Unterricht* 75/76 (1995), 184-204.

[55]Due to some harsh criticism from the Hamburg National Theater, Lessing opted out of particular critiques of actors themselves by the 25th *Stück* and moved to a more general commentary on theater and drama itself. Lessing faults actress Sophie Hensel for playing a part for which she was physically unsuited. "Die Aktrice ist für die Rolle zu groß. Mich dünkt einen Riesen zu sehen, der mit dem Gewehre eines Kadetts exerzieret," (*Werke und Briefe, Bd. 6*, 281). The backlash he received because of this comment forced him to move away from acting critiques.

actor Conrad Ekhof, which then leads him to a general discussion of acting practices. In one of his typically pithy observations, Lessing sums up the problem of human dissimulation and acting with "[Die Empfindung] kann sein, wo man sie nicht erkennet; und man kann sie zu erkennen glauben, wo sie nicht ist."[56] Out of this Lessing derives two models of the actor. The first, which is a variation of de Saint Albine's, is the actor who truly feels but is incapable of expression due to the limitations imposed by his own body. The second, a clear reference to Riccoboni's actor, can exert himself with ease over his body to produce expressions as an imitation of states of the soul, which the actor does not actually possess in this moment. Lessing believes the second model is the more prevalent one, but criticizes it for it being "nichts als mechanische Nachäffung."[57]

From the ashes of these two models Lessing reveals his own theory, synthesizing their most desirable contributions in a unique and innovative view of the actor. Elaborating on his previous acting methodology found in his commentary on de Sainte Albine, Lessing describes in detail the methods for creating the appearance of spontaneity, which he explains as the following:

> Wenn er nur die allergröbsten Äußerungen des Zornes einem Akteur von ursprünglicher Empfindung abgelernet hat und getreu nachzumachen weiß—den hastigen Gang, den stampfenden Fuß, den rauen, bald kreischenden bald verbissenen Ton, das Spiel der Augenbraunen, die zitternde Lippe, das Knirschen der Zähne usw.—wenn er, sage ich, nur diese Dinge, die sich nachmachen lassen, sobald man will, gut nachmacht: so wird dadurch unfehlbar seine Seele ein dunkles Gefühl von Zorn befallen, welches wiederum in den Körper zurückwirkt, und da auch diejenigen Veränderungen hervorbringt, die nicht bloß von unserm Willen abhangen. Sein Gesicht wird glühen, seine Augen werden blitzen, seine Muskeln werden schwellen; kurz, er wird ein wahrer Zorniger zu sein scheinen, ohne es zu sein, ohne im geringsten zu begreifen, warum er es sein sollte.[58]

As in his commentary on de Sainte Albine, Lessing is concerned here with the moment when the

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[56]Lessing, *Werke und Briefe, Bd. 6*, 196.

[57]Ibid.

[58]Ibid., 198-199.

body loses its unidirectional role, that of mere expression, and becomes a necessary mediator in the creation of affective expressions.[59] The appropriate intentional gesticulation activates the soul from which unmediated expression derives. The soul's effects on the body are automatic, operating beyond the direct reach of the will. Through this automatic correlation, the soul works back inexorably onto the body, producing the spontaneous appearance of affective expression ideal for acting. Lessing's acting methodology is thoroughly embedded in imitation, just as in Riccoboni's actor: through observation, an actor begins by imitating the bodily movements associated with a particular affect, in this case, rage. Yet he diverges with Riccoboni by transforming imitation into a kind of activation: by moving the body in a manner typically associated with rage, an actor can effectively "deceive" his soul into producing the affective expressions that are beyond volition, in this case a glowing face, flashing eyes, and swelling muscles. The reasons for how an intentional corporeal movement activates the soul are not readily apparent, yet they seem to rely on something resembling behaviorialist anthropological assumptions, whereby in the same manner as Pavlov's dog, the soul is activated because of its accustomed correspondence to the body.[60] While his first account found in the de Sainte Albine

[59]According to Erika Fischer-Lichte, the significance of this passage rests in the relationship between the actor and the audience. The actor must completely transform his body into a perfect sign, which corresponds to the emotions of the character he is depicting, in such a way that the audience completely perceives the body as a sign of the figure's affective state. For Lessing the body then becomes a sign through its effectiveness in convincing the audience to believe the authenticity of its expression. The impetus for Fischer-Lichte's analysis is "die Beredsamkeit des Körpers," namely a concern for how the actor's body could emotionally move the audience. See Erika Fischer-Lichte, "Der Körper als Zeichen und als Erfahrung. Über die Wirkung von Theateraufführungen" in *Theater im Kulturwandel des 18. Jahrhundert. Inszenierung ung Wahrnehmung von Körper – Musik – Sprache* ed. Erika Fischer-Lichte (Göttingen: Wallenstein Verlag, 1999), 55.The emphasis on the relationship between the audience and the actors should not be surprising considering Lessing and his contemporaries were fundamentally concerned with the question of audience reception; to justify the existence of the theater dramaturges usually point out its potential moral or didactic uses for the audience. While the role of signs in acting is fundamental for Lessing, focusing on the end result, an affected audience, draws attention away from the processes that enabled the result in the first place, which I argue is Lessing's direct concern here.

[60]Even while implying an accustomed correspondence between soul and body, Lessing forgoes postulating how something of material and of immaterial substance are able to acknowledge changes in each other. Košenina takes the relationship between *Seele* and *Körper* as evidence Lessing is moving beyond Leibniz' paradigm of pre-

translation is ambiguous on the subject of whether actors produce genuine affects, the second rendition of his theory establishes that it is only the appearance of the actor that changes, while his affective state remains unaltered. Lessing's theory therefore represents a kind of self-deception, but unlike de Sainte Albine's actor who really believes that he is angry, Lessing's actor deceives a particular aspect of his soul into inducing the affective expression that doesn't correspond to the internal state. In this way an actor does not have to worry about losing control of his body to his affects.

Perhaps the most intriguing idea derives from the last sentence of this quotation. The actor takes on the appearance of being outraged in a manner that is beyond his comprehension, since he does not have access to the inner processes arousing his affective expressions. Unlike immediate gestures such as moving an arm or sitting down, to which consciousness and intentionality have a direct relationship, mediated gestures provide abilities otherwise unavailable to the actor, but at the same time they add additional links between intentionality and expression. He might act as the intentional first cause in a chain reaction, but once the process begins, it proceeds automatically so that it is confined to the realm of the soul and body. In this way the process requires a mediating body whose autonomy from our consciousness is deprived of access to the process. This point can be viewed as a reiteration of the last sentence of "Der Schauspieler." Not having access to the internal processes, which for Ziolkowski serves as Lessing's firm rejection of the mediated expression, it is clear that Lessing is merely describing how the automatic processes work and accentuating the fact that mediation requires a relinquishing of direct control. To return to the example provided in the introduction, this process resembles tickling in that it enables indirectly and mechanically an otherwise spontaneous affect

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established harmony. See *Anthropologie und Schauspielkunst*, 4. Ultimately the question of how the soul and body interact is not as critical as Lessing assumption that they do interact.

through the activation of the body, which proceeds automatically and without conscious access. Laughing mechanically requires an autonomous body (in the case of tickling, another human) who can initiate the process. Lessing's theory, however, goes beyond the example of tickling since it can be accomplished without others: to be Lessing's ideal actor is then in a certain sense to know how to tickle oneself.[61]

An immediate objection to Lessing system as it presents itself becomes apparent. Although Lessing elevates his ideal actor above Riccoboni's "mechanische Nachäffung," it is difficult to believe that Lessing isn't equally operating under a mechanical model. The obvious difference is that while Riccoboni's model eschews metaphysical elements that might complicate bodily control, Lessing views the soul as a vital component of acting. If the soul can be triggered reliably, however, it appears that the soul of Lessing's actor becomes just another component in the machine of acting. Lessing had rejected La Mettrie's materialist worldview early in his career, but it is difficult not to see the resemblances between the two.[62]

A brief summary is in order: Lessing is fundamentally interested in the corporeal expressions independent from intentionality, the kind most likely to convince an audience of authenticity of a performance. These gestures are unavailable to Riccoboni's control-conscious actor, who does not feel what he is portraying, while Sainte Albine's actor lacks any mechanism for control to be able to employ these expressions appropriately on the stage. Lessing, recognizing that the "wahrer Schauspieler" requires both control and the use of unintentional gestures, develops a solution whereby the actor favors indirect bodily control over direct; he uses

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[61]There is one significant difference between the tickling and Lessing's actor's process. Laughter produced by tickling, for those who are ticklish, is innate: there is no need to learn how to laugh when stimulated. Lessing's system requires the initial process, the close imitation of gestures, to be learned.

[62]H.B. Nisbet "Lessing and Philosophy" in *A Companion to the Works of Gotthold Ephraim Lessing* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2005)

intentional movements associated with the desired affect as a form of mediation to activate a state of the soul, which then works back onto the body to produce the desired affects in the body. Through a series of automatic processes, the actor can then *indirectly* intend affective expressions.

From Actor to Poet: Lessing's Second Theory of Acting

Lessing has another point about the mechanical creation of affect that appears not in the *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*, but rather ten years earlier in the same correspondences with Moses Mendelssohn from 1757 that address tickling. Both Mendelssohn and Friedrich Nicolai object to the extensive use of declamation for scenes in *Miss Sara Sampson* that should be *indeklamabel,* the kind where signs of the body "speak" for themselves and don't require dialogue as an additional description, which if accurate would effectively constitute a step backwards in the history of acting practices. In the drama almost all the characters are found persistently describing the gestures of their bodies and as well as the bodies of the other characters.[63] Lessing responds to his two friends on August 18, claiming that he won't change this style of writing (even if Mendelssohn proves mathematically that these descriptions shouldn't be there) as long as more people read the play than see it performed.[64] Nicolai, however, was unsatisfied with this explanation and doesn't permit the issue to disappear. Although he agrees that Lessing is correct in his assertion that declamation facilitates reading, he believes that it translates poorly on the stage. Taking this to its logical conclusion, Nicolai adds that this kind of declamation in dramas

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[63]Letter from Mendelssohn to Lessing, *Werke und Briefe, Bd. 11, part 1*, 233.

[64]Lessing, *Werke und Briefe, Bd. 11, part, 1*, 239.

would lead to plays being written which are not practically suitable for the theater at all, for which he submits the poorly received *Der Tod Adams* from Klopstock as an example.[65]

There is no record for how Lessing understood Nicolai's indirect comparison to Klopstock's failed drama to *Miss Sara Sampson*, but it can be speculated that he probably did not take it as a compliment. Nevertheless we can thank Nicolai's diligence in pressing this issue, since it forced Lessing to outline exactly his reasoning behind the declamation, or at least to quickly invent an explanation that would convince Nicolai. In a letter on September 14, 1757 Lessing asserts that his use of declamation also has an indispensible place in the theater for actor's gestures.

> Einen Teil der Geberden hat der Schauspieler jederzeit in seiner Gewalt; er kann sie machen, wenn er will; es sind dieses die Veränderungen derjenigen Glieder, zu deren verschieden Modifikationen der bloße Wille hinreichend ist. Allein zu einem großen Teil anderer, und zwar gleich zu denjenigen, aus welchen man den wahren Schauspieler am sichersten erkennt, wird mehr als sein Wille erfordert; eine gewisse Verfassung des Geistes nehmlich, auf welche diese oder jene Veränderung des Körpers von selbst, ohne sein Zutun, erfolgt.[66]

This description begins along the same terms that have been thus covered in this chapter: a demarcation between immediate and mediated gestures. Once again corporeal autonomy prevents direct control of spontaneous gestures, but through the same logic of corporeal autonomy these gestures leave themselves open to be indirectly produced as an automatic process in which movements of the body can affect the soul. Even the language of this last sentence closely mirrors the final thesis in "Der Schauspieler," demonstrating a definitive link between his previous and subsequent work on this theory. Yet in this particular manifestation of his theory of acting Lessing adds an innovative variation. He writes

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[65]Letter from Nicolai to Lessing. *Werke und Briefe, Bd. 11, part 1*, 243.

[66]Lessing, *Werke und Briefe, Bd. 11, part 1*, 250.

> Wer ihm also diese Verfassung am meisten erleichtert, der befördert ihm sein Spiel am meisten. Und wodurch wird diese erleichtert? Wenn man den ganzen Affekt, in welchen der Akteur erscheinen soll, in wenig Worte faßt? Gewiß nicht! Sondern je mehr sie ihn zergliedern, je verschiedener die Seiten sind, auf welchen sie ihn zeigen, desto unmerklicher gerät der Schauspieler darein.[67]

Lessing effectively refutes both Nicolai and Mendelssohn, maintaining unorthodoxly that this style of declamation enhances the capabilities of the actor. The descriptions within the dialogue assist in the creation of these gestures in a process once restricted to within an actor. The more potent and multifaceted the declamatory description, the more effectively the actor becomes "caught" in the description in such a way that the audience becomes more convinced by the subtlety of the performance. Referring now to the actress playing Marwood from *Miss Sara Sampson* Lessing develops this thought further:

> Wenn ich von einer Schauspielerin hier nichts mehr verlangte, als daß sie mit der Stimme so lange stiege, als es möglich, so würde ich vielleicht mit den Worten: *verstellen, verzerren und verschwinden,* schon aufgehört haben. Aber da ich in ihrem Gesichte gern gewisse feine Züge der Wut erwecken möchte, die in ihrem freien Willen nicht stehen, so gehe ich weiter, und suche ihre Einbildungskraft durch mehr sinnliche Bilder zu erhitzen, als freilich zu dem bloßen Ausdrucke meiner Gedanken nicht nötig wären.[68]

This passage references a critical moment in *Miss Sara Sampson*, in which she describes the imagined brutal death of her child as a form of revenge against her former lover Mellefont.[69] As performed on the stage this scene requires the very affective display that evades intentionality. Lessing explains it is his task as a poet to awaken affects in the actor through "mehr sinnliche Bilder."[70] In this particular instance, which Lessing takes as exemplary for his use of

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[67]Ibid.

[68]Ibid.

[69]I treat Marwood's scene of rage within the context of Miss Sara Sampson in the second half of the chapter.

[70]Theodore Ziolkowski, Peter Michelsen, Jutta Golawski-Braungart agree that Lessing's declamations serve as extensive stage directions of gestures for stimulating the actor's affective response (a point that Lessing himself makes), which they then demonstrate inundate the dialogue in *Miss Sara Sampson*. Where Ziolkowski dismisses Lessing's interest in spontaneous gestures, Michelsen acknowledges that Lessing's September 14th letter to

declamation, he writes violent and descriptive images into Marwood's speech, which will help inflame the actress's stage presence. The actress playing Marwood becomes her own spectator, who at the same time experiences her speech as someone producing it and as someone hearing it, creating an image so lifelike that it stimulates in her an affective response. Although Lessing is referring to an actress's relationship to her own speech and its ability to engender good acting, there is no reason why this cannot also represent a relationship between actors, because an actor's declamation can also affect other actors on the stage. Indeed, Lessing's declamation has actors not only referring to their own corporeal expressions, but also those of other actors.

To produce spontaneous expressions, Lessing relies on interactions not just between an actress and herself and an actress with other actors, but also between poet and actors. The poet is required because the mere prosaic expressions are not sufficient and presumably conventional stage directions would lack not only this poetic effect but also a verbal presence on the stage.[71] The model would proceed as follows: The poet creates the desired affective reactions in the actor by creating verbal images associated with the affect gestures lines in the dialogue. Yet this is a deviation from Lessing's theory of acting as I have discussed it so far. The "sinnliche Bilder" do not inform the actor about how he should move his body in order to initiate a particular state of the soul. The images instead work directly on his "Verfassung des Geistes," bypassing the material body altogether. As a significant deviation from his other writings on acting practices, Lessing is unveiling a second theory of mediated gestures, one in which the actor's intentionality

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Mendelssohn is a continuation of the abrupt ending of "Der Schauspieler." All three, however, stop short of explaining the larger implications of Lessing's theory of poetry in relation to his theories of acting. See Ziolkowski, "Language and Mimetic Action," 270; Michelsen, *Der unruhige Bürger: Studien zu Lessing und zur Literatur des achtzehnten Jahrhunderts* 185-88; Golawski-Braungart, "Lessing und Riccoboni," 190.

[71]This reasoning is an extension into the theater of Lessing's distinction between philosophy and poetry in *Pope ein Metaphysiker!*

loses its role in initiating the automatic sequence in favor of the poet's intentionality.[72] As in the first theory, the poet's intervention functions as a supplement, but one that can enable elusive affective expressions. The critical difference between the two, however, is that the first theory is restricted to the relationship between body and soul, while the second introduces language in the form of poetry into the equation.[73]

Several important consequences emerge out of this second theory of acting. First, Lessing's juxtaposition of poetry and acting demonstrates that the poet also relies on the body, not as a material form but as a dematerialized description of gestures, in order to affect an actor. Although the body is not mentioned as a specific requirement for the "sinnliche Bilder," the references to declamation from the correspondences between Lessing, Mendelssohn, and Nicolai are *de facto* about the body. The two theories appear to rely on the same logic for producing affective expression. Just as Lessing's ideal actor cannot directly will an affective expression, but rather proceeds indirectly by means of mediated gesticulation, so too does a poet rely on the body as a mediator between soul and intentionality, utilizing corporeal descriptions, rather than a material body, in order to produce the affective response. In this respect the poet, like the actor, recognizes his own limitations and has to work through mediation in order to create the appearance of spontaneous gestures.

Second, with Lessing's creation of another step in the chain reaction of the actor's affective expression, it is now the poet who becomes the first cause in a tortuous sequence: the poet writes through corporeal descriptions, which then acts upon the actor's soul, which then acts

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[72]The general recognition that these are two separate theories is lacking in scholarship. For clarity's sake, I will refer to Lessing's notion of the actor working through his own body to activate mediated gestures as the first theory and the poet's activation of the same gestures through poetic description as the second theory.

[73]The extent to which these two theories are compatible is not self-evident. It is conceivable that there could be a dual activation of the soul, one through the body the other through images, but Lessing makes no mention of this.

upon the actor's affective expression. Subjectivity of acting becomes an intersubjectivity between actor and poet, where the poet intervenes in the acting process due to the limitations of a single subjectivity. By becoming the first cause, poetry takes the privileged position over acting in Lessing's hierarchy of media. Good acting is made possible by good poetry, and Lessing's "wahrer Schauspieler" requires a "wahren Dichter," whose writing takes charge to lead the actor in such a way that the appropriate poetic image can stimulate the actor's desired affective response. In the light of Lessing's second theory of acting, the most remarkable component of natural acting, the contrived creation of affect on the stage that appears to be spontaneous and genuine, is really the work of the poet, who uses the actor as a tool to push poetry into new domains. The result is evident: acting loses much of its autonomy as an art and becomes subordinated to poetry.[74] In a very real sense Lessing is saying that there isn't much that poetry cannot do.

This extension of the domains of poetry is also found in *Laokoon*, which is worth considering for understanding the full implications of Lessing's actor. After he carefully demarcates poetry and painting, in part XVII of *Laokoon* Lessing claims that the poet too can "paint" in the sense that his words can become images in the mind of the reader; poetry, which consists of conventional signs, can then also approach the role of the natural sign, which is normally reserved for the visual arts. He writes:

> Der Poet will nicht bloß verständlich werden, seine Vorstellungen sollen nicht bloß klar und deutlich sein; hier mit begnügt sich der Prosaist. Sondern er will die Ideen, die er in uns erweckte, so lebhaft machen, daß wir in der Geschwindigkeit die wahren sinnlichen Eindrücke ihrer Gegenstände zu empfinden glauben, und in diesem Augenblicke der

[74]Although Lessing claims in his letter to Mendelssohn that "Der dramatische Dichter muß dem Schauspieler Gelegenheit geben, seine Kunst zu zeigen,"(*Werke und Briefe Bd. 11, 1,* 249), I agree with Michelsen that Lessing only *appears* to agree with Mendelssohn, although I would extend his argument and also claim that the spirit of Lessing's theory here substantially privileges the poet over the actor. The art of the actor to produce the elusive spontaneous expressions depends on the art of the poet. See Michelsen, *Der unruhige Bürger*, 185.

> Täuschung, uns der Mittel, die er dazu anwendet, seiner Worte bewußt zu sein aufhören.[75]

This particular passage represents Lessing's development in the *Laokoon* of a notion he had been working with at least since *Pope, Ein Metaphysiker*: the differences between prose and poetry. The reader, just like the actor, takes in the poet's lifelike images to the extent that he is no longer conscious of their status as a verbal medium. In this way the poet can overcome poetry's status as a conventional sign. In the same manner that stage directions are not sufficient for arousing affects in actors, unadorned prose also lacks the poetic effect to make the reader forget that he is looking at words on a page.[76] The same logic applies equally to the theater: just as the actor produces the natural signs of the body to most effectively activate the affective response of the audience, so too does the poet create an image so lifelike that it causes the desired affects in the actor.

Under this view, the power of poetry appears to defy all the limitations of its medium. Poetry can "paint" images in the minds of its readers and at the same time create spontaneous gestures in the actor's body that are beyond his abilities to intend. While this passage from the *Laokoon* demonstrates the boundlessness of poetry as a medium, we see the poetic descriptions of the body bearing a striking resemblance to Lessing's actor. In the same way that the actor feigns an appearance on the stage, poetry feigns being a visual image, but never quite becomes the natural sign that it strives to be. Good poetry, like good acting, is so convincing that it makes the audience briefly forget what they knew from the beginning: the fact that it is an illusion. But it isn't just that the relationship between poet and reader mirrors the relationship between actor and audience. If poetry is capable of intervening in the domain of any other media, becoming a

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[75]Lessing, *Werke und Briefe, Bd. 5, part 2*, 124.

[76]It is important to note that Lessing's distinction between poetry and prose doesn't correspond to the use of meter.

natural sign when it is really just a conventional one, then it can do so only if it conceives of itself under a model of acting. It is the actor as a transient figure who moves in between worlds under the auspices of an illusion. If we can conceive of acting as taking on a new role in light of self-perceived limitations, then Lessing views poetry in terms of acting: poetry has to disguise itself so that it can take part in realms that are beyond its limitations, in which poetry can be so effective that we forget that it is actually something else. Thus while Lessing has poetry as the chief art in acting, it relies on a model of acting in the first place in order to achieve this status. Poetry cannot *directly* produce the natural signs that are denied to its medium, but it can *indirectly* do so by the mediation of lively images in an actor's head, so that the poetry can inhabit a body. Thus Lessing's theory of acting functions not only as a medium itself, but also as a theory of a meta-medium that enables interaction between and among media.

If Lessing's second theory of acting subordinates the first by creating images of bodies that replace the actual work the body was doing to affect the soul, he would appear at first to be creating several unnecessary steps for his ultimate goal of producing desired affects in the audience. Why does he even need actors in the first place, if according to the *Laokoon* the poet can directly affect the reader? Lessing willingly acknowledges that despite the versatility of poetry, its own immaterial status imposes significant limitations. Lessing first proposes the superiority of the materiality of a medium in his journal, the *Beiträge zur Historie und Aufnahme des Theaters,* in which he differentiates between two kinds of people. "Ein Mensch der Empfindung," he writes, is one "der durch die bloße Lesung, zum Exempel eines Trauerspiels, bis zu süßen Tränen gebracht wird."[77] Since most people do not belong to this oversensitive type, Lessing views the theater as a practical necessity, one whose corporeal nature has a greater impact. What the body lacks in terms of the versatility of poetry, it gains in intensity.

[77]Lessing, *Werke und Briefe, Bd. 1*, 825.

In the search for a reliable method to produce the appearance of spontaneous gestures on the stage, Lessing originates two somewhat compatible theories of the actor. The first, derivative of two theorists from the French tradition, places the actor in a position to create spontaneous gestures by mediating the power of his own body. The second, which prefigures his work in *Laokoon*, places the poet in the director's seat and bestows upon him the incredible ability to arouse the same spontaneous gestures through poetry. Both, however, rely on the edifice of the body, whether in material or dematerialized form, to achieve their desired effect. In the remainder of this chapter I will bring Lessing's theories of acting to bear on *Miss Sara Sampson,* a drama that has no lack of references to the body.

Acting as Verstellungskunst and Containing Spontaneity in Miss Sara Sampson

Lessing's dedication to theatrical realism knew few limits, even if it meant inflicting pain upon actors, as is demonstrated in his engagement in the 55th and 56th *Stücke* of the *Hamburgische Dramaturgie* with the merits and dangers of slapping on the stage. The issue emerges from his review of a performance of John Bank's restoration drama *The Earl of Essex*, where in a crucial scene Queen Elizabeth in a fit of rage slaps the Earl. Lessing notes that this is one of the few moments in which slapping takes place in a tragedy, the other instance being *Le Cid*, and he cites Voltaire's rejection of the practice on the basis that it violates the rules of propriety for depicting noble characters. In his usual fashion, Lessing takes the opposing viewpoint to Voltaire, claiming the principles of theatrical naturalism trump propriety: "Und wenn es nun einmal in der Welt so ist: warum soll es auch nicht auf dem Theater so sein? Wenn die Ohrfeigen dort im Gange sind: warum nicht auch hier?"[78] Although potentially offending

[78]Lessing, *Werke und Briefe, Bd. 6*, 460.

noble sensibilities doesn't justify banning it from the theater, Lessing realizes that depicting slapping on the stage is problematic in other ways. He writes

> Der Schlag setzt sie in Feuer; die Person erhält ihn, aber sie fühlen ihn; das Gefühl hebt die Verstellung auf; sie geraten aus ihrer Fassung; Scham und Verwirrung äußert sich wider Willen auf ihrem Gesichte; sie sollten zornig aussehen, und sie sehen albern aus; und jeder Schauspieler, dessen eigene Empfindungen mit seiner Rolle in Kollision kommen, macht uns zu lachen.[79]

Once again, adhering to theatrical realism comes at an affective price, since to slap someone on the stage is to play with figurative fire. Slapping produces a spontaneous affective response in a manner not dissimilar from tickling. While slapping can reliably produce a blushed face, many other affective responses accompany it that can easily disrupt a performance. That an actor's actual affect state, not the one of the character he is depicting, might impede good acting is not directly addressed by Lessing in his writings on dramaturgy discussed earlier in this chapter. While Lessing's theory effectively appropriates the spontaneous signs of affect while maintaining control, it doesn't account for the threat represented by actual affects, the very ones that troubled Riccoboni in regard to the *Gefühlsschauspieler*.

The lack of discussion is understandable. Lessing only finds two examples of theatrical slapping in tragedies and thus they do not constitute the kind of immediate concern found in the representation of affects in general. His theory of acting effectively circumvents the dilemma between Riccoboni's and de Sainte Albine's actors by producing the appearance of spontaneity without the affective baggage. The slapping episode might on a certain level just be an opportunity for him to take a shot at his old nemesis Voltaire and simultaneously legitimate a new theatrical aesthetic. As such, Lessing's theories of the actor address the theatrical question of producing the appearance of spontaneity on the stage, but have little to say on another theatrical problem: containing actual spontaneity. Although containing spontaneity on the stage

[79]Ibid.

might not represent a deeply pressing issue, for those utilizing acting techniques to orchestrate their behavior off the stage, the spontaneity of affect presents a significant concern. The example of slapping provides a theatrical instantiation of the conflict between one's own emotional state and the staged self.

For Lessing, the worlds on and off the stage are not as disparate as one might imagine. As attested to above, Lessing's theatrical realism requires that the stage inform itself of the cultural practices of everyday life, including slapping. Yet for Lessing the relationship between the theater and the world goes both ways. In the introduction to his 1750 *Beiträge zur Historie und Aufnahme des Theaters* Lessing declares that certain rules must necessarily exist in the art of a performance, and it is the task of the *Beiträge* to discover these rules. The significance of these rules, however, is not restricted to the theater. "Diese Regeln erstrecken sich nicht allein auf die Schauspieler, sie können allen nutzen, welche die Beredsamkeit des Körpers brauchen."[80] Here Lessing laments that the moderns have lost the ability to make effective use of the body's rhetorical skills, which the ancients such as Cicero were significantly better at employing. As a potential remedy, Lessing hopes that the contribution of the *Beiträge* to the discourse of theatrical arts can then extend beyond its use in the theater and have consequences in the real world. It is not just the question of "if it happens in the world, why not in the theater?" but rather, if it happens in the theater, why not in the world?

Although Lessing unfortunately never elaborated on the intersection of acting practices and containing spontaneity alluded to in his discussion of slapping, the issue appears prominently in Lessing's bourgeois tragedy *Miss Sara Sampson*.[81] *Miss Sara Sampson* provides a rich source

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[80]Lessing, *Werke und Briefe, Bd. 1*, 825.

[81]Scholars have often paired an examination of Lessing's thoughts on acting with an analysis of *Miss Sara Sampson*. Indeed, this is with good reason, for *Miss Sara Sampson*'s use of corporeal dissimulation provides fertile ground for

of observations on the antagonism between a staged self and acting practices. When we view Lessing's first bourgeois tragedy in terms of his theory of acting in relation to spontaneity, the drama adds a new dimension alluded to above in the *Beiträge*: the use of natural acting methods outside of the theater. At least one significant difference emerges when the logic of the actor is taken off the stage and placed into the world. While within the context of the theater the audience is aware of the theatricality of the performance, outside the context of the theater acting methods can be utilized for deception. Dramas such as *Miss Sara Sampson* lend themselves to this kind of analysis since, although they can be performed on the stage, within the logic of the drama itself the situations are real.

In *Miss Sara Sampson* there is no better example of this than Marwood. For Marwood acting in the world with the intent to deceive has two components: she has to both *produce* the appearance of spontaneity through affective signs as well as *contain* the genuine affects that emerge out of her contact with other characters. The first component relies on knowledge of acting models, providing a character with the techniques, such as those discussed in the first half of this chapter, to *produce* the appearance of affective signs by taking the spontaneous expressions of the body and employing them conventionally. Marwood produces affective signs using the model of the actor of the French acting theorist Riccoboni, proceeding from the notion that she can directly control her body to give the impression that she feels a certain way in order to gain a strategic advantage over her adversaries. The second component is the containment of genuine affects. While the stage rarely has the danger of spontaneously arousing undesirable affects, with the notable exception of slapping, Marwood responds to real situations instead of contrived ones without knowing which genuine affects might arise out of the dialogue. This

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discussions on acting methods. Košenina, Ziolkowski, Golawski-Braungart all use *Miss Sara Sampson* in this manner.

compromises a delicate situation that requires complete corporeal control. Marwood effectively lacks a “script” and is not in a position where she can predict the course of events, becoming subject to the vicissitudes of spontaneous human interactions. Marwood’s problem isn’t that she fails to generate dissimulating signs, but rather that she is so invested in her task that it creates in her an affective state that she struggles to bring under control, since she is responding to real situations instead of scripted and contrived ones. Thus Marwood’s stylization of herself as an actress as well as her manipulation of the other characters are attempts to impose a “script” upon her environment, in order to render her encounters predictable to an extent that they minimize the possibility of a genuine affective response. While Marwood begins with some initial success, unpredictable situations arise that result in her failure to script the world, where she is unable to exert herself directly and be fully in control of her body. In light of this failure, Marwood shifts to a reliance on affective states and mediated corporeal control. Lessing represents controlled mediation, however, not through an actress struggling with the autonomy of her own body, but rather through the indirect manipulation of other bodies.

Miss Sara Sampson is considered to be the first German bourgeois tragedy. Published in 1755, the drama debuted on the stage in Frankfurt an-der-Oder in the same year. It begins with Sir William, a lachrymose member of England’s lower nobility, with his servant Waitwell in search of Sir William’s missing daughter, Sara, whom they believe has been seduced by a former houseguest, Mellefont. Sir William discovers his daughter in a deplorable *Wirtshaus*, but hesitates to confront her directly for fear of losing her forever. In the adjacent room, Sara stays with her servant, Betty, in a state of anguish because Mellefont is constantly delaying their impending marriage. Mellefont, who has cold feet, receives word that his former lover Marwood seeks to meet with him. Hoping to cause Mellefont to fall in love with her, Marwood uses

Mellefont's daughter, Arabella, as a ploy to win back his sympathies from Sara. Although her plan begins with some success, Mellefont eventually comes to his senses, aggravating Marwood to the point of madness, in which she attempts to kill Mellefont (as well as threatens to kill Arabella) in order to carry out her revenge. Mellefont thwarts her attack, seizes her dagger, and noticing that she is mentally unstable and unpredictable, says he will take Arabella away. Marwood concedes she has lost, but requests to see Sara under an assumed identity in return for her compliance with Mellefont's wishes. In the meantime, Sara learns from Waitwell that her father has arrived not to condemn her, but rather to accept her decision and to seek reconciliation with both her and Mellefont. Mellefont, who realizes that the tensions from the beginning of the drama are finally resolving, feels he can no longer delay the marriage and becomes apprehensive about his future with Sara. Marwood disguises herself as Mellfont's cousin, Lady Solmes, meets Sara, and reveals Mellefont's objectionable amatory exploits, including those involving Marwood. Although disturbed by these allegations, Sara ultimately rejects these stories of Marwood's past, considering them to be the result of foolish decisions that are no longer relevant for her. A furious Marwood then fails to maintain her identity as Lady Solmes and reveals her true identity. Not surprisingly, Sara is frightened and flees. Realizing her time for revenge is fleeting, Marwood devises a final scheme and departs. By the fifth act Sara begins to feel uneasy and unexpectedly collapses. It is then revealed in a letter from Marwood that she switched Sara's *Kordialpulver* with poison; Marwood agrees to release Arabella if no one follows her to Dover. Sara accepts her fate and tries to restore the order that her death would take away; she commands Mellefont and her father to love each other and to not carry out revenge. When she dies, Mellefont stabs himself with the dagger he took from Marwood. Rising from the depths of utter hopelessness, Sir William orders a single tomb to enclose both bodies and promises to adopt

Mellefont's daughter Arabella.

Much of the conflict in *Miss Sara Sampson* arises out of the question: How can one know when to trust a sign? Whether it is Sara mistaking Marwood for Lady Solmes or Marwood contorting her facial expressions to feign smiling or crying, the characters find themselves in a world where deception could be lurking around every corner. As a result, the drama organizes a hierarchy of corporeal signs to decipher the characters' true feelings. Verbal communication is the first casualty in this world of deception and is routinely demonstrated to be unreliable.[82] Since language is consciously employed and therefore more readily subject to dissimulation, verbal utterances fail to be reliable indicators of thoughts.[83] The characters privilege instead the spontaneous signs of the body as the key to reliable knowledge, the same signs whose appearance Lessing seeks to reproduce on the stage. Even the naïve Sara recognizes and repeatedly privileges spontaneous body communication over the word. In a conversation with Mellefont, Sara sets up the opposition between language and the unintentional signs of the body, which she observes first in Waitwell's attempt to hide her father's crying episode after her departure "Ach! dein Mund sagt nein; und deine eigenen Thränen sagen ja,"[84] then later the same in Mellefont's reaction to her father's forgiveness "Sie schweigen? O nein, diese Träne, die sich aus Ihrem Auge schleicht, sagt weit mehr, als Ihr Mund ausdrücken könnte" (MSS, 481)

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[82]Isabelle Wentzlaff-Mauderer provides a detailed analysis of instances of verbal failings. See the section "Sprachliche Kommunikationversaümnisse und Verteidigung im Bereich des Nonverbalen: Gotthold Ephraim Lessings *Miss Sara Sampson* (1755)" in *Wenn statt des Mundes Augen reden: Sprachlosigkeit und nonverbale Kommunikation in Miss Sara Sampson (1755), Düval und Charmille (1787), Kabale und Liebe (1784) und Penthesilea (1808)* (München: Ludicium, 2001).

[83]This is by no means an absolute. When Sara shows Lady Solmes her father's letter of reconciliation, Solmes retorts that it might be a forgery. Sara's response is remarkable: "Die Verstellung bleibt immer kalt, und eine so zärtliche Sprache ist in ihrem Vermögen nicht," (*Werke und Briefe,* Bd. 3, 498). With the understanding "zärtlich" in the eighteenth century as a synonym for "empfindsam," Sara (foolishly) believes that dissimulation is limited in its depictions of sentimental language, a belief Marwood routinely repudiates.

[84]Lessing, *Werke und Briefe, Bd. 3, 472*. Subsequent references to *Miss Sara Sampson* shall use embedded citations to this edition under *MSS.*

Similarly, before Sir William sends Waitwell to speak with Sara, he instructs him in the art of decoding the signs of the body.

> Gieb auf alle ihre Mienen acht, wenn sie meinen Brief lesen wird. In der kurzen Entfernung von der Tugend kann sie die Verstellung noch nicht gelernt haben, zu deren Larven nur das eingewurzelte Laster seine Zuflucht nimmt. Du wirst ihre ganze Seele in ihrem Gesichte lesen. (MSS, 468)

While Sara might be capable of lying or disguising what she means verbally, as the naïve character her inner state is necessarily expressed in corporeal signs. She can neither produce the illusion of an affective expression nor control her real affects. For Sara's father, being outside of his household creates the possibility of corporeal dissimulation, yet this requires a degree of socialization that Sara hasn't acquired in her short time outside the "pure" domain of her father's house. While Sara thus possesses none of the abilities required of an actor,[85] the implication is that the control of these affective signs is indeed a craft that can be learned, setting the stage for Marwood.

The entrance of Marwood in the drama upends the privileged position of affective signs. Whereas Sara is incapable of conceptualizing herself under the model of an actor, Marwood regularly and effectively uses her acting talent for deceit, whether feigning a pleasant expression, producing fake tears, or actively taking on a new identity.[86] The dialogue routinely accentuates her status in the drama as a kind of actress, whether it is Mellefont commenting on her behavior

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[85]This is in contrast to a striking example of acting Lessing cites in the 16th *Stück* of the *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*, in which Lessing claims that the English actress Katherine Shore, wife of playwright Colley Cibber, at the age of eighteen gave the performance of a lifetime as the tragic heroine Zaïre. Lessing attributes her success and superiority over other English actors to her youth and inexperience. To reconcile this paradoxical view of a young innocent woman as both the worst and as the best actor, we only have to realize that Lessing was attempting to support natural acting practices against the more stilted variety. As Katherine Shore had never learned any acting methods, she essentially played herself, which apparently corresponded well with the character of Zaïre.

[86]Although it has been often claimed (correctly) that Marwood is *like* an actress because of her ability to employ behavioral modification techniques (see Golawski-Braungart, "Lessing und Riccoboni," 188), there exists a distinct possibility that Marwood might have been an actual actress herself. Norton recalls that he originally met Mellefont "in der nichtswürdigsten Gesellschaft von Spielern und Landstreichern." (Lessing, *Werke und Briefe, Bd. 3*, 437) Although Marwood isn't specifically referred to as an actress, her appearance in Mellefont's life is juxtaposed with the time he spent among the players and hobos.

“Marwood, Sie reden vollkommen Ihrem Charakter gemäß” or Marwood making a case for meeting Sara a second time “ich spiele meine Rollen nicht gern halb” (MSS, 453 and 495). In addition, Marwood’s status as an actress includes the ability to produce the believable appearance of affect where none actually exists. When Marwood is accounted for in this manner, we can then view her and Miss Sara as binary pairs, with Miss Sara as the virtuous yet naïve poster child for *Empfindsamkeit*, whose unmediated affective expression betrays her affective states, and Marwood as the dishonored woman who resorts to trickery, deceiving her interlocutors into trusting her. This isn’t to say that Marwood represents a pre-*Empfindsamkeit* mind set on the order of Gottsched’s *Sterbender Cato*. Both characters are the offspring of the revaluation of affect and the body that emerged out of *Empfindsamkeit*, only bearing a different relation to it. Marwood also recognizes the body’s status as a reliable indicator of one’s interior state, and her dissimulation relies on the assumption of the harmony between affective state and expression; she also utilizes this cultural precept to her advantage. She thus challenges the foundations of *Empfindsamkeit* not from “without” as a rationalist, but rather from “within”, appropriating its logic for her own nefarious purposes, and demonstrating where its own naïve assumptions collapse.[87]

In one particular instance before meeting with Mellefont, Marwood contorts her face in a manner that would give the impression of a certain affective state:

> **Marwood**. Mellefont! – Geschwind, führe ihn herauf! *(Der Bediente geht ab.)* Ach, Hannah, nun ist er da! Wie soll ich ihn empfangen? Was soll ich sagen? Welche Miene soll ich annehmen? Ist diese ruhig genug? Sieh doch!
> **Hannah**. Nichts weniger als ruhig.
> **Marwood**. Aber diese?

[87]Paradoxically, the conscious utilization of spontaneous signs for acting purposes undermines their spontaneous status. In the process of employing spontaneous signs, Lessing collapses their signification, since his actor’s affective expression isn’t an automatic indexical reference to an affective state in the same way that smoke means fire. This line of reasoning will be developed further in my discussion of Schiller’s *Der Geisterseher*.

Hannah. Geben Sie ihr noch mehr Anmut.
Marwood. Etwa so?
Hannah. Zu traurig!
Marwood. Sollte mir dieses Lächeln lassen?
Hannah. Vollkommen! Aber nur freier – Er kömmt. (MSS, 450-51)

Although it has become customary to cite this passage in the scholarly literature, some additional arguments warrant its repetition here.[88] Marwood employs the technique of bodily contortion successfully for most of the play, altering her facial features so they correspond with the expression she wishes to represent. While Ziolkowski claims that Marwood represents de Sainte Albine's ideal actor on account of one instance where she appears to convince herself she is actually Lady Solmes and not Marwood,[89] here we are presented with some of the best evidence that Marwood is an example of Ricciboni's cold actor: Marwood is deliberately exerting herself over the aspects of her body that are directly accessible to her will. She does not attempt to place herself in a particular affective state since it would potentially cost her the meticulous control of her body. In addition, the kinds of affects referenced here are not without significance. While Marwood does successfully demonstrate control over those facial expressions within her intentionality (to smile despite her internal state), she has difficulty with *Anmut* or grace, which, prefiguring Schiller and Kleist, lies beyond human ability to directly intend.

The dual world of affective expression versus an affective state is further enforced by how Marwood behaves once her show has come to an end. After a long and difficult conversation with Mellefont, Marwood regains her strength once she no longer has anyone to

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[88]See Ziolowski, 272, and Golawski-Braungart, 188.

[89]I do not believe that this passage contains sufficient evidence to support Ziolkowski's claim. This scene fails to demonstrate that Marwood is actually deceiving herself through her gestures à la de Sainte Albine. But unlike de Sainte-Albine's actor, Marwood's objective isn't to become Lady Solmes emotionally, but rather to affirm to herself an identity that is willing to use deception. Furthermore, Ziolkowski claims that according to Lessing's acting theory the declamation affects the "mood" of the actor. Whereas Lessing is clear in the 3rd *Stück* of the *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*, that only the affective expressions are affected without inducing an affective state. If the same logic applies to his notion of poetic acting, then an actor only creates spontaneous appearing expressions and not an affective state. See Ziolkowski, 272.

perform for.

> **Marwood** *(indem sie um sich herumsieht).* Bin ich allein? – Kann ich unbemerkt einmal Atem schöpfen und die Muskeln des Gesichts in ihre natürliche Lage fahren lassen? – Ich muß geschwind einmal in allen Mienen die wahre Marwood sein, um den Zwang der Verstellung wieder aushalten zu können. – Wie hasse ich dich, niedrige Verstellung! Gewiß würde ich mich zu dir nicht herablassen, wenn mir ein Tyrann seine Gewalt, oder der Himmel seinen Blitz anvertrauen wollte. – Doch wann du mich nur zu meinem Zwecke bringst! (*MSS*, 496).

This is another often quoted passage from *Miss Sara Sampson*, but I have also included the last two sentences, which are usually left out. *Verstellung* or dissimulation, addressed here in an apostrophe by Marwood, illustrates the potential gulf between an affective state and an affective expression, the space where Marwood is able to insert herself and exploit. This scene also adds an additional component not considered in the previously mentioned acting methodologies. For these methodologies, an actor's affective state before the play commences and its potentially lingering consequences for good acting is hardly a question: de Sainte Albine, Riccoboni, and Lessing have their actors in a "zero" position, where their task is either to produce the appearance of an affective expression or the actual affective state, which then in turn produces the expression. *Miss Sara Sampson* demonstrates that acting is based on a model of production as well as one of containment. For Marwood acting is a constant struggle that exhausts her, since she not only has to produce the appearance of particular affects, but also suppress the ones that she is actually feeling. The containment of spontaneity is an issue because Marwood is responding to actual situations, from which, unlike a play, genuine affects can easily emerge. The last two sentences accentuate this fact. Although Marwood asserts here that she is disinclined to deceive, this is not due to any contradiction it creates within her natural disposition as a good human being or because it violates an ethical norm. Marwood distains dissimulation because it is the least reliable means of executing her plan. Dissimulation for Marwood

necessarily means a constant struggle with her body, which is subject to forces beyond her control. Dissimulation is depicted as a tool for the weak, for those desperate individuals who have no other options available to them.

If the Riccoboni model serves only as a delaying tactic to contain Marwood's genuine affects, is there another method available to her from the actor's arsenal for maintaining her composure? I argue that we can view the stylization of herself as an actress and her manipulation of her environment as attempts to stem the source of affect by creating predictable situations. In his critique of the *Gefühlsschauspieler*, Riccoboni claims that predictable situations hinder the actor's ability to produce a genuine affect. He has the reader imagine an actor coming on stage, in which the script calls for this actor to be shocked by a particular line. The actor, Riccoboni maintains, cannot actually become shocked, since he already knows the play by heart, a fact that Riccoboni provides as further evidence that the practice of actors matching their own feelings with their characters is untenable.

What Riccoboni sees as a drawback is the very thing that Marwood actually utilizes for the purposes of dissimulation. If familiarity with a script deprives the actor of all the spontaneous affects that accompany a new situation, then to curb spontaneity off the stage, one should turn her reality into a script. Scripting renders events predictable so that affects are not aroused that would unravel her plan. *Miss Sara Sampson* provides numerous examples of Marwood functioning as a kind of scriptwriter of the plot. She assigns herself roles, such as a kinder manifestation of herself for Mellefont. She even explicitly outlines her role for herself, as when she assumes the role of Lady Solmes for her encounters with Sara: "Ich bin nicht mehr Marwood; ich bin eine nichtwürdige Verstoßene, die durch kleine Kunstgriffe die Schande von sich abzuwehren sucht" (*MSS*, 497). Marwood's relationship with her identities becomes so

entangled that it is difficult to determine which is the real Marwood, if there is one at all. In addition to herself, Marwood situates others as actors in her elaborate plan. She provides explicit instructions for how Mellefont should act when he introduces her as Lady Solmes to Sara "Melden Sie mich bei ihr als seine solche; Sie sollen bei meinem Besuche zugegen sein," (MSS, 466) which she secures with blackmail. She also informed Sir Sampson of Sara's location, hoping his arrival would hasten the end of Mellefont's infatuation with her. Marwood even prescribes Mellefont's possible future, which she derives presumably from her own experience with him. By elevating herself to the most aware character in the drama, Marwood effectively manipulates a small circle of characters into predictable behavior. While her use of the Riccoboni model relies on direct corporeal control, her efforts to contain affect are the result of mediation, namely arranging characters in a predictable and therefore less affect-arousing manner. By scripting her behavior as well as the behavior of others, Marwood brings new meaning to Lessing's assertion "[Die Empfindung] kann sein, wo man sie nicht erkennet" away from a failed actor of de Sainte Albine and towards a model of a successful imposter, who hopes to stem a potentially lingering affective state so it doesn't manifest itself in the body in the first place.

As effective as her plan is in rendering the order of events predictable, there are two distinct moments that escape her machinations, where she fails to exert herself fully over her body, her affective state shines through her dissimulation, and she is unmasked. The first of these moments is during her encounter with Mellefont in the second act. Although Marwood initially convinces Mellefont to leave Sara (largely through employing her daughter Arabella as a prop), Mellefont unexpectedly changes his mind, a deviation from Marwood's plan that unleashes "eine ganz andere Marwood." Provoked, her inner rage breaks out of her rationally controlled body

and she launches herself into the most macabre of speeches.

> **Marwood**. [...]Sieh in mir eine neue Medea!
> **Mellefont.** (*erschrocken*). Marwood – –
> **Marwood.** Oder wenn du noch eine grausamere Mutter weißt, so sieh sie gedoppelt in mir! Gift und Dolch sollen mich rächen. Doch nein, Gift und Dolch sind zu barmherzige Werkzeuge! Sie würden dein und mein Kind zu bald töten. Durch langsame Martern will ich in seinem Gesichte jeden ähnlichen Zug, den es von dir hat, sich verstellen, verzerren und verschwinden sehen. Ich will mit begieriger Hand Glied von Glied, Ader von Ader, Nerve von Nerve lösen und das Kleinste derselben auch da noch nicht aufhören zu schneiden und zu brennen, wenn es schon nichts mehr sein wird als ein empfindungsloses Aas. Ich—ich werde wenigstens dabei empfinden, wie süß die Rache sei! (MSS, 464)

This is perhaps the most remarkable passage in the drama and therefore requires careful analysis. In this brutal scene, Marwood manifests her interior conflict between employing acting methods for dissimulation and the control over her spontaneous corporeal expressions. The enraged Marwood describes herself as the new Medea, who would torture and murder her child, Arabella, out of vengeance against her departed former lover Mellefont. By referring to herself as Medea, she is not only situating herself in the tradition of the mother who murders, but also drawing attention to her role primarily known from the context of the theater: the dramas of Euripides, Seneca, and Corneille. Marwood has internalized the acting mentality to such an extent that even in an uncontrolled affective state she conceives of herself as an actress playing a character.[90] In contrast to other manifestations of her acting, however, this is not dissimulation. In effect she actualizes Riccoboni's critique of the *Gefühlsschauspieler*, but instead of Orestes she becomes Medea. She loses herself in the role like de Sainte Albine's actor, but unlike him, her rage isn't the result of self-deception, but rather the uncertainty of unscripted life.

Since Marwood's inner turmoil had been building up for quite some time, and had also been suppressed for not being opportune, its violent release can be viewed as a kind of catharsis: the purging of her affects through their expression, while providing her with some interior relief,

[90]Marwood never becomes a true Medea, since Arabella remains unharmed till the end.

also spoils her attempts at subterfuge. Yet a more twisted and sadistic version of catharsis also encompasses both Arabella and Mellefont. As the described torture ensues, her child's facial features contort, revealing an expression of pain. These facial expressions, however, aren't so much Arabella's, but rather Mellefont's. As Mellefont's facial features undergo the same contortions that Marwood routinely yet begrudgingly endures to deceive others, she is exacting her revenge by forcing Mellefont (or his representation in Arabella) to suffer the same pain Marwood does. This literal "Mitleid" ends, however, not with the purging of the extremities of affects, as Lessing's later theory of "Reinigung" in the *Hamburische Dramaturgie* outlines, but with Marwood erasing Arabella's facial features that resemble Mellefont and then laying exclusive claim over her child. Arabella effectively transforms from "dein und mein Kind" to "mein Kind," in that she is the product of a single parent, Marwood. Paradoxically, the same words that depict Marwood's status as an actress, to disguise, contort (*verstellen*, *verzerren*), are used here for the erasure (*verschwinden*) of Arabella/Mellefont's facial features and identity, rather than describing the creation of feigned facial expressions. The relationship of the body to acting as the creation of identity contains within it the mechanisms for destruction.

With the traces of Mellefont purged from his child, Marwood's subsequent destruction of Arabella's body can be viewed as an act of violence upon herself. In the ensuing act of murder, Marwood tears Arabella's body apart, representing Marwood's frustration of having to act against the spontaneity of her body. Marwood's sadistic rage and her "begierige Hand", however, are contrasted with the means of exacting her revenge: the killing does not proceed indiscriminately, but rather is meticulous, resembling a dissection, excising "Glied von Glied, Ader von Ader, Nerve von Nerve." Functioning under an Enlightenment model for understanding the part/whole relationship, her deconstruction of the body into its constitutive

elements is an attempt at providing a scientific understanding of obscure corporeal processes under which the spontaneity of affect operate and to which Marwood would otherwise not have access. Breaking down the body represents Marwood's fantasy of seizing control over her affects that have caused her to struggle endlessly to dissimulate. The end result of the dissection is surprisingly not described so much as death (although it is a *de facto* death) but rather as a state in which the remains are without any sensation or feeling. While it might seem obvious that a dead body can feel neither pain nor emotion, the fact that it is highlighted is telling. In the dissection of her child Marwood is enacting her own desire not to feel: to be "empfindungslos" is the imposter's fantasy, since to feel is to subject oneself to the possibility of a revealing spontaneous gesture. The only sentiment worth experiencing comes after dissimulation has run is course — the satisfaction of revenge.

The complexity of this scene is further compounded when we juxtapose it with the exemplary status of the poet's intervention into acting practices described by Lessing in his discussion with Mendelssohn and Nicolai. For the sake of convenience I will provide the complete passage from Lessing's letter again:

> Und wodurch wird diese erleichtert? Wenn man den ganzen Affekt, in welchen der Akteur erscheinen soll, in wenig Worte faßt? Gewiß nicht! Sondern je mehr sie ihn zergliedern, je verschiedener die Seiten sind, auf welchen sie ihn zeigen, desto unmerklicher gerät der Schauspieler darein. Ich will die Rede der Marwood auf der 74. Seite zum Exemplar nehmen. – Wenn ich von einer Schauspielerin hier nichts mehr verlangte, als daß sie mit der Stimme so lange stiege, als es möglich, so würde ich vielleicht mit den Worten: *verstellen, verzerren und verschwinden,* schon aufgehört haben. Aber da ich in ihrem Gesichte gern gewisse feine Züge der Wut erwecken möchte, die in ihrem freien Willen nicht stehen, so gehe ich weiter, und suche ihre Einbildungskraft durch mehr sinnliche Bilder zu erhitzen, als freilich zu dem bloßen Ausdrucke meiner Gedanken nicht nötig wären.[91]

One of the more striking features of this passage emerges when we consider the two meanings of *zergliedern* in Marwood's speech. The first meaning, which Lessing explicitly deals with in this

[91]Lessing, *Werke und Briefe, Bd. 11, part 1*, 250.

passage, is the "immoderate" use of poetic declamation in order to produce the "sinnliche Bilder" which then activate an actor's affective expression. However, within the context of the drama, *zergliedern* becomes literal: the dismemberment of the body.

It is hard to believe that Lessing wouldn't have been aware of this wordplay. What is remarkable is while both deal with the control of affect, the control manifests in two distinct ways. *Zergliedern* as a strategy for acting practices for the actress playing Marwood can ignite a desired affective response, but in the case of Marwood it results in the imagined destruction of the body and all affects. The two seemingly opposite meanings of *zergliedern* are two sides of the same coin. Just as the poet describes body gestures in detail, when Marwood describes the process of dismembering the body, she is at the same time creating an affect-inducing image of it, a "sinnliches Bild," for herself, her interlocutors, and the audience.[92] Similarly, just as in the words *verstellen*, *verzerren*, and *verschwinden* represent a duality of creation and destruction, so too does *zergliedern* both create and destroy.

By drawing attention to the dematerialization and ultimate destruction of the body, Marwood's speech functions as a graphic moment of self-reflection of the consequences of Lessing's theory of acting. The description of gestures designed to ignite the actor's soul at the same time dismembers of the actor's autonomy and thus seizes the position in initiating affects that the actor's body had in Lessing's first theory. Lessing's *Zergliederung* of the body, through the taming and control of the spontaneous, not only effectively kills the affect by rendering it into a machine (the actor in both of Lessing's theories is also "empfindungslos"), but also takes away the autonomy of the body. Thus in this image we have the dark side of Lessing's project:

[92]This is variation of his argument from his *Laokoon*: Homer describes the construction of the shield of Achilles to create an image, whereas Marwood is deconstructing the body.

Empfindsamkeit becomes less the celebration of human sentiment, but rather the Enlightenment's appropriation of affect.

There is an additional paradox in the example of Marwood's speech. Although she is referring to a literal dissection, there is no real action to which they refer: they are just "sinnliche Bilder." This is in contrast to almost all other instances of declamation in *Miss Sara Sampson*, since it does not refer to anything that is taking place on the stage, but rather to an imaginary event conjured from the raging fantasies of Marwood. Mendelssohn and Nicolai's original issue, the excessive declamation describing the movements on the stage hardly seems answered here, when any other instance would have provided a more convincing example. Lessing provides the one example from the text that is the least exemplary of what he is trying to demonstrate. Yet in doing so he inadvertently reveals that his second theory of acting was never about providing readers with descriptions of the staged events or to guide an actor's movements through spoken stage directions; but rather justifying the poet's intervention in acting.

After Marwood gives her speech, she unsuccessfully attempts to attack Mellefont with a dagger. This represents the end result of her first failure to control her affects, and results in the loss of her credibility with Mellefont. With the deception of Mellefont no longer a viable option, Marwood turns to deceive Sara by disguising herself as Mellefont's cousin, Lady Solmes, with the hope that she can convince Sara to leave Mellefont on account of his less than reputable past. The second moment of affective failure emerges out of this conversation, in which Sara unintentionally provokes Marwood by exclaiming how she should never have made the same mistake as Marwood. As Marwood becomes infuriated and can no longer maintain her facial contortions, Sara recognizes the change in her corporeal expression and cries out "Ich erschrecke, Lady; wie verändern sich auf einmal die Züge Ihres Gesichts? Sie glühen; aus dem

starren Auge schreckt Wut, und des Mundes knirschende Bewegung" (MSS, 508). Marwood, once again unable to maintain her expressions against a raging affect, abandons her role as Lady Solmes and loses her last avenue for dissimulation of her bodily signs.

By the end of Marwood's confrontation with Sara, her identity is revealed and any further attempts at acting, whether as Lady Solmes or the Marwood who feigns subservience to Mellefont, become futile. This second scene featuring the loss of equanimity, however, is not another rendition of the first. This time, when her status as a cold actress ends, we find Marwood reinventing her relation to affect. As a result of the failure to directly exert herself over her body, Marwood recognizes the limits imposed by her corporeal autonomy and instead relies exclusively on mediation to carry out her revenge. This new relationship to affect first manifests during a moment of self-reflection after Marwood's failed encounter with Sara, when she realizes that the very feature that unraveled her plan, the autonomy of affect, can be used against her foes.

> Wenn es doch nur bestimmt wäre, in meinen Adern nicht allein zu toben! – Was halte ich mich mit Wünschen auf? Fort! Ich muß weder mich noch sie zu sich selbst kommen lassen. Der will sich nichts wagen, der sich mit kaltem Blute wagen will. (MSS, 510)

This moment represents a significant shift in acting methods in the drama. Marwood is alone and still incensed, her affects lingering from Sara's disparaging remarks. At the same time her faculty of reason remains intact to the extent that she reflects on her situation, but also intends an action that she would otherwise be incapable of. Instead of viewing affect as detrimental to her plan, Marwood in this moment realizes that her affect is the only thing that can assist her to carry out her revenge. Marwood here departs from Riccoboni's model of the actor to one with a seeming resemblance to de Saint Albine's, the actor who places himself in an affective state to produce the most realistic expressions possible. Unlike de Sainte Albine's actor, however, the feigning of

affective signs is not the objective. Where Marwood's actual affects undermine her acting methods, they enable her ability to *act* in the sense of executing her plan. The utilization of affects shifts from imitating its signs to reliance on the affective state to perform an otherwise unfathomable act: Marwood can only commit murder if she is enraged. Her affects are harnessed by a rationality that recognizes the disadvantage of acting against corporeal autonomy but the advantage when her body's affect coincides with her intentions. Here lies the shift that Marwood makes: instead of fighting against her affects, she embraces their spontaneity and willingly utilizes them for her own purposes.

Marwood's new relationship with affect can only initiate her plan for revenge, but it cannot carry it out to completion. The only way she can exact her revenge on Mellefont is through another person, through mediation. Her remark that "der will sich nichts wagen, der sich mit kaltem Blute wagen will" not only refers to herself ("der" in the sense of "whoever"), but also Mellefont, illustrating the second level in which Marwood's relationship to affect changes: the exploitation of the affects of others. Marwood takes advantage of the discrepancy between how one behaves under particular affective states by indirectly inducing despair and grief in Mellefont, of whose outcome she can reliably predict. In addition to the inability to control *her* body, Marwood's corporeal limitations manifest when her attempt to directly kill Mellefont fails due to her inability to control *his* body: he's too strong and takes her dagger with ease. Thus we can read her final act, the poisoning of Sara, as her realization of the limitations of direct control, which she forgoes in favor of mediated control through the bodies of others: her body, acting through Sara, whose death then automatically affects Mellefont. With Sara's death she unleashes a chain reaction of events and indirectly makes Mellefont kill himself with the same dagger, which gives her the results she wanted originally but was unable to carry out. In the end

Marwood effectively stages spontaneity, Mellefont's death, yet only in appearance, since it was the intended result of her machinations.

Chapter Two

„Die Werkzeuge des Willens“: Corporeal Spontaneity and the Disharmony of Schiller’s Actor

In 1803 a theatrical experiment took place in Weimar. It was in this year that Friedrich Schiller’s drama *Die Braut von Messina* was published and performed on the stage, a play that departed radically from the conventions of the contemporary theater. *Die Braut von Messina*’s most notable innovation was the reintroduction of the chorus, a prominent feature from the tragedies of antiquity yet largely incongruent with the dominant European theater aesthetic in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[93] The aspirations of Schiller’s latest drama were anything but modest. He wrote to Wilhelm von Humboldt that “”Sie werden daraus urtheilen, ob ich als Zeitgenosse des Sophokles auch einmal einen Preiß davon getragen haben möchten.”[94] While winning praise from Schiller’s close friends, *Die Braut von Messina* was met with unenthusiastic reception in the eyes of the public and critics. One particularly scathing review of the play is found in a letter from Clemens Brentano to Achim von Arnim: “Die Braut von Messina aber ist mir ein erbärmliches Machwerk, langweilig, bisarr [*sic*] und lächerlich durch und durch. Der äußerst steife Chor macht eine Wirkung wie in katholischen Kirchen die Repetition des halben

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[93]A notable exception to this is the standard inclusion of the chorus in *Singspiele* and operas, two genres often performed at the Weimar Theater. For a contextualization of Schiller’s use of the chorus, see Anton Sergl “Das Problem des Chors im deutschen Klassizismus: Schillers Verständnis der *Iphigenie auf Tauris* und seine *Braut von Messina*“ in *Jahrbuch der deutschen Schillergesellschaft Vol. 49* (1998), 165-94.

[94]See Schiller’s letter to Humboldt on February 17, 1803. *Schillers Werke. Nationalausgabe. Zweiunddreissigster Band. Schillers Briefe* 1803-05, ed. Axel Gallhaus (Weimar: Hermann Böhlaus Nachfolger, 1984), 11. Subsequent citations from Schiller will be embedded as “NA” according their corresponding volume.

Vaterunsers von der Gemeinde."[95]

Schiller had anticipated the reaction to the chorus and deliberately made some concessions to the theatrical naturalism in *Die Braut von Messina*, as he expressed in a letter to his close friend Christian Gottfried Körner.[96] In the months following the first performance, Schiller felt compelled to justify his use of the chorus and added an introduction to the first printed edition of the drama. His "Über den Gebrauch des Chors in der Tragödie," however, does not merely explain his inclusion of the chorus. In this introduction Schiller outlines an uncompromising new aesthetic paradigm for the theater. Schiller freely admits that the chorus is an affront to the naturalist aesthetic that dominated German theater at the time, which had been pioneered a few decades prior by Lessing and was best represented in its contemporary form by Iffland and Kotzebue. Yet a confrontation is precisely his objective. Against criticism of the chorus Schiller writes

> Was das gemeine Urtheil an dem Chor zu tadeln pflegt, daß er die Täuschung aufhebe, daß er die Gewalt der Affekte breche, das gereicht ihm zu seiner höchsten Empfehlung, denn eben diese blinde Gewalt der Affekte ist es, die der wahre Künstler vermeidet, diese Täuschung ist es, die er zu erregen verschmäht. (NA X, 14)

While Schiller in a certain sense agrees with the criticism of the chorus, namely that the chorus disrupts the theatrical illusion, he challenges its underlying assumption that its inclusion is necessarily detrimental to the theater. The emotionally enraptured audience—the ultimate aim of the natural acting paradigm—for him invariably leads to the tyranny of affect and diminution of human freedom. An element as unrealistic as the chorus of antiquity is the most decisive measure

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[95]*Clemens Brentano. Sämtliche Werke und Briefe, Band 31*, ed. Jürgen Behrens *et al* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1991), 143.

[96]In this same letter Schiller expresses his frustration with the German audience's attachment to notions of theatrical naturalism. "Ueber den Chor und das vorwaltende lyrische in dem Stücke sind die Stimmen natürlich sehr geteilt, da noch ein großer Theil des ganzen deutschen Publicums seine prosaischen Begriffe von dem Natürlichen in einem Dichterwerk nicht ablegen kann. Es ist der alte und der ewige Streit, den wir beizulegen nicht hoffen dürfen" (NA XXXII, 25).

“dem Naturalism in der Kunst offen und ehrlich den Krieg zu erklären, so sollte er uns eine lebendige Mauer sein, die die Tragödie um sich herumzieht, um sich von der wirklichen Welt rein abzuschließen und sich ihren ideale Boden, ihre poetische Freiheit zu bewahren,” (NA X, 11). Correspondingly, Schiller thoroughly rejects the previous efforts to construct an aesthetic illusion on the stage by equating them with a kind of theatrical fraud and referring to them as “immer ein armseliger Gauklerbetrug” (NA X, 10).

“Über den Gebrauch des Chors in der Tragödie” is representative of an aesthetic movement that will later fall under the heading of Weimar Classicism. As a paradigm shift it would displace one set of values—the imitation of nature and erasure of artifice in an aesthetic illusion—in favor of aesthetic autonomy, foregrounding artifice, and subordinating idiosyncrasies for the sake of an ideal form. While this movement did not mean the end of naturalism on the stage, a convention that would continue to dominate in German theaters until the end of the nineteenth century, it openly questioned many of the suppositions under which Lessing had been working a few decades earlier. As a result, theories examining the correlation between corporeal spontaneity and acting would likely find little purchase in a theatrical paradigm that issues war declarations against naturalism.

While “Über den Gebrauch des Chors in der Tragödie” would effectively close the book for him on theatrical naturalism, Schiller had earlier in his carrier been an active contributor to the discourse on corporeal spontaneity, developing innovations that would rival Lessing and extending its relevance beyond its implications for affect. Like Lessing, the significance of Schiller’s intervention into this discourse never remains confined to notions of the actor. In order to theorize about corporeal spontaneity and acting, Schiller draws on his experience in eighteenth-century anthropology and medicine. Theorizing about the corporeal spontaneity of the

actor is not only an aim for his dramaturgical endeavors, but also a useful means to theorize about other discursive systems, above all aesthetics. While utilizing dramaturgical models enables Schiller to augment and re-conceptualize aesthetic questions, it also presents its own set of challenges and contradictions.

This chapter explores the interactions between Schiller's notions of actors and acting and his work in other discourses by tracing his contributions to the discourse of corporeal spontaneity. Schiller's treatment of the art of the actor and issues of spontaneity often appear in tandem in his writings, primarily in four texts: "Über das gegenwärtige teutsche Theater," *Der Geisterseher*, the "Kalliasbriefe," and *Über Anmut und Würde*. In the first part of my chapter, I examine Schiller's essay "Über das gegenwärtige teutsche Theater," his initial intervention into the natural acting discourse discussed in the previous chapter on Lessing. In this essay Schiller develops a notion of the ideal actor based upon the phenomenon of sleepwalking. For Schiller sleepwalking represents an anthropological anomaly in which interaction between affective state and expression becomes briefly interrupted, gesturing towards a possible solution for circumventing the paradox of displaying affect on the stage. In an effort to grapple with the issue of staging affect, Schiller frequently accentuates the disharmonious essence of acting, in which an actor's corporeal expression does not correspond to his interior state.

If "Über das gegenwärtige teutsche Theater" speculates on how actors break the connection between interior state and bodily expression, his unfinished novel *Der Geisterseher* reveals its implications. *Der Geisterseher* illustrates a world in which the methods of the disharmonious actor are extrapolated onto an extra-theatrical environment to create the illusion of spontaneity for the purposes of deception. Yet once it is recognized that any affective expression could effectively be feigned with the appropriate acting techniques, corporeal signs

lose the weight they once had in determining someone's intentions, resulting in skepticism. The dual concerns of deception and epistemological uncertainty that arise out of *Der Geisterseher* serve as a persistent threat for which he must devise solutions in his subsequent thought in the areas of corporeal spontaneity and aesthetics.

By the 1790s Schiller maintains his interest in corporeal spontaneity by drawing on it heavily for his examinations of beauty and grace. His "Kalliasbriefe" and *Über Anmut und Würde* can be viewed as attempts to make theories of corporeal spontaneity palatable for an aesthetic that no longer privileges affective expression. On the one hand these two essays function as a bridge between aesthetic paradigms, a curious stage in Schiller's thought when natural acting and Weimar Classicism were fundamentally compatible. On the other hand, in the process of utilizing corporeal spontaneity under a new guise, Schiller is forced to mitigate the radical conclusions of the disharmony of the human being from *Der Geisterseher* by erecting limits on its use. In the "Kalliasbriefe" beauty can maintain itself as a concept by declaring its domain only to appearances: "Freiheit in der Erscheinung." While staging spontaneity is compatible with beauty as freedom in appearance, it is at odds with the spontaneity of grace because it undermines the harmony between state and expression. Due to the systemic and moral threats that staging spontaneity imposes to grace and the beautiful soul, Schiller is forced to repress the notion of theatrical grace as a form of deception, leading to his banishment of actors from being graceful.

"Im Fall eines Nachtwandlers": Acting and Mastering Spontaneity in the Early Schiller

"Über das gegenwärtige teutsche Theater," a brief essay from 1782 that intervenes in the main debates of the contemporary German theater, bears all the traces of Schiller's

characteristically dualistic thinking. From his early career as a student of medicine, in which he sought to explain the interaction between mind and body, to his philosophical period in the 1790s, in which he attempted to harmonize numerous binary pairs such as grace and dignity, nature and reason, beauty and the sublime, the naïve and sentimental poet, Schiller's writings often postulate oppositions whose incomplete nature necessitates a synthetic resolution.[97] The state of the theater in the early 1780s is no exception to this dualism, which Schiller views as beset by polarized and misguided aesthetic principles. The essay can be divided into three issues: the theater's capacities as a moral institution, theater's relationship with the concept of nature, and the actor's relationship with affective expressions. Each corresponds respectively to an existing fault in the basic elements of the theater: audience, dramatist, and actor. Although the final opposition is the most relevant for a theory of corporeal spontaneity, I will cover the first two issues in order to situate Schiller within the contemporary theater discourse on acting.

Schiller's first target for criticism is the theater's aspirations as a moral institution. Of the three unresolved issues of the contemporary theater, this is the only one that Schiller does not formulate as explicitly oppositional, since he only characterizes it with a single extreme. This extreme is Schiller's challenge to the tradition of Gottsched and Lessing, in which the theater as a public institution contributes to the moral improvement of its audience. In contrast to most of his contemporaries, Schiller in this essay is skeptical of the theater's capacity to morally improve the audience and therefore society at large. He debunks theater's grand claims of being a moral institution as largely disingenuous, since the theater has an invested interest in its own survival and therefore tends to exaggerate it abilities. "Was sollten die Waaren nicht", Schiller cynically

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[97]There is some debate about whether to characterize Schiller as a monist or a dualist. Although Schiller strove to reconcile dualistic principles for much of his carrier, I agree with Frederick Beiser that Schiller's aim is not to postulate an underlying totality, but rather to demonstrate how dualistic principles exist in both tension and harmony. See Beiser, *Schiller as Philosopher: A Re-Examination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 23-24.

remarks, “wenn man den Verkäufer höret?” (NA XX, 80). Continuing to question the theater’s moral mission, Schiller asks whether fewer girls (*Mädchen*) have been seduced after seeing *Miss Sara Sampson*, or whether predatory princes have been deterred in the wake of *Emilia Galotti*, a shrewd critique of Lessing’s dramaturgical theory that uses his own plays against him.[98]

Although Schiller explicitly portrays only one of the extremes of the stage—dramaturges’ delusions of grandeur as to the capacities of their profession—there is another extreme that leaves a noticeable yet implicit mark on the essay. The textual presence of this second extreme is felt by Schiller’s appropriation of many of the key arguments from Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s *Letter to D’Alembert*, a text notorious in theater history for its thorough and devastating critique of the stage’s immoral essence. Schiller’s judgments have an unmistakable resonance with Rousseau’s. In addition to failing to inculcate virtue,[99] both are in agreement, for example, that the theater merely panders to the audience and amplifies already present dispositions and affects.[100] Furthermore, both Schiller and Rousseau are concerned about the sexual threat that actresses pose. Rather than the more conventional death of Emilia Galotti, Schiller prefers that she “nachlässig schön dahinsinkt” (NA XX, 81) as an affront to audience expectations and to avoid arousing their sexual desires. Schiller goes one step further and ironically suggests that

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[98]“Werden darum weniger Mädchen verführt, weil Sara Sampson ihren Fehltritt mit Gifte büßet? […] Wenn Odoardo den Stahl, noch dampfend vom Blute des geopferten Kindes, zu den Füßen des fürstlichen armen Sünders wirft, dem er seine Mätresse so zugeführt hat – welcher Fürst gibt dem Vater seine geschändete Tochter wieder,“ (NA XX, 80).

[99]A subtle distinction should be made here: While Schiller claims that the theater is more or less indifferent to morality, Rousseau believes that tragedy, instead of making the audience more sensitive to suffering, actually desensitizes them through repeated exposure to the tragic.

[100]Compare Rousseau’s “But far from choosing, for that reason, the passions which he wants to make us like, he is forced to choose those which we already like […] At London a drama is interesting when it causes the French to be hated; at Tunis, the noble passion would be piracy; at Messina, a delicious revenge; at Goa, the honor of burning Jews. If an author shocks these maxims, he will write a very fine play to which no one will go” (Rousseau, *Politics and Arts*, 21) to Schiller’s “So viele Don Quichottes sehen ihren eigenen Narrenkopf aus dem Savoyardenkasten der Komödie gucken, so viele Tartüffes ihre Masken, so viele Falstaffe ihre Hörner,“ (NA XX, 80).

marionettes replace actors in order to divert attention from actors to the content of the play, effectively de-sexualizing the performance.

Schiller is, however, anything but a German Rousseau and "Über das gegenwärtige teusche Theater" is not an extension of the *Letter to D'Alembert*'s anti-theatrical tradition. Just as Schiller repudiates Lessing's approach to the theater, he is no more in favor of banning the theater à la Rousseau, who represents the other extreme of the opposition.[101] In contrast to Rousseau, Schiller shows little concern for the potential moral implications of a sexualized stage, but rather believes that such a performance would negatively affect the theater's aesthetic properties, namely its ability to create an illusion.[102] The use of marionettes as a means to restore the aesthetic integrity of the stage leaves open the possibility that the flaws in theater are not inherent, and that an ideal theater might one day be realized.[103] Schiller does not exclude the possibility that the theater can educate, but since the audience seeks to stimulate its own desires, the present condition of the audience prevents moral improvement. In a moment of frustration that plays upon Lessing's programmatic statement on the German theater from the *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*,[104] Schiller writes "Bevor das Publikum für seine Bühne gebildet ist, dürfte wohl schwerlich die Bühne ihr Publikum bilden,"(NA XX, 82) The critical difference

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[101]Schiller's position between two extremes of the discourse appears as well in his 1785 essay "Was kann eine gute stehende Schaubühne eigentlich wirken?" Schiller writes "Über keine Kunst ist – soviel ich weiß – mehr gesagt und geschrieben worden, als über diese; über keine weniger entschieden. Die Welt hat sich hier, mehr als irgendwo, in Vergötterung und Verdammung geteilt, und die Wahrheit ging verloren durch Übertreibung. Der härteste Angriff, den sie erleiden mußte, geschah von einer Seite, wo er nicht zu erwarten war." (NA XX, 89) As a *philosoph* who denounced the theater, Rousseau is the most likely candidate for this hardest and unexpected attack.

[102]As Mary Helen Dupree observes, Schiller aligns with the naturalistic acting of his predecessors by considering female sexuality a threat to the illusion on the stage by drawing too much attention to the artifice of the performance itself. See Dupree "Ein Geschöpf der Einbildung unseres Herrn Leßing: Fictions of Acting and Virtue in the Postmortem Reception of Charlotte Ackermann (1757-1775)" in *Goethe Yearbook*, Vol. 16 (2009), 145-6.

[103]This is once again in contrast to Rousseau, who held that the theater is necessarily, instead of contingently, immoral.

[104] "Über den gutherzigen Einfall, den Deutsche kein Nationaltheater zu verschaffen, da wir Deutsche noch keine Nation sind!." (HD, 497).

with Rousseau is how Schiller employs his argumentation. While the ultimate goal of Rousseau is to delegitimize the theater as an institution, Schiller employs the same arguments for the sake of reforming theater. By carving out a mediating position that appropriates the arguments of theater opponents into a plea *for* the theater, Schiller is able to synthesize the opposing legacies of Lessing and Rousseau, tempering the theater's lofty ambitions by pointing out its persistent self-delusions. By proposing realistic expectations about the uses and capacities of the theater, Schiller creates a space for himself in an already crowded discursive field by harmonizing opposing positions.

Once Schiller has sufficiently chastised the audience, he moves on to enumerate the faults of the dramatist, which he situates as belonging to another set of extreme positions: French and English dramaturgical models. At stake are ultimately the aesthetic principles that guide both poetic and dramaturgical practices, so that his criticism applies not only to acting but also the composition of drama. As a proponent of the natural acting paradigm and its attempts to create an illusion on the stage, Schiller vehemently criticizes the stilted French staging practices that lack a regard for naturalism. Schiller gives the example of an actor playing Rodrigo from Corneille's *Le Cid,* who while on stage resorts to excessive declamation of his state of embarrassment and whose affective signs left clear traces of its theatricality.[105] Such observations would differentiate Schiller little from the criticism of his *Sturm und Drang* contemporaries, but unlike them, Schiller doesn't favor the English theater, and instead places it on the other pole of the opposition. While "Der leidige Anstand in Frankreich hat den Naturmenschen verschnitten," English theater exaggerates nature by magnifying "ihre Finnen und Leberflecken unter dem Hohlspiegel," (NA XX, 82). Schiller aligns the present state of German theater with the English, who often depict their heroes similarly to the larger-than-life

[105]Schiller reports he saw the actor "über seine Verlegenheit Vorlesung halten" (NA XX, 82).

figure of Goliath, “grob und gigantisch.” Deviating from the criticism of his *Sturm und Drang* contemporaries, Schiller’s hyperbolic depiction of English theater likely derives from Lessing, who gives a similar account in his *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*.[106]

Schiller sets up both positions as extremes in an effort to undermine their authority: one that disregards a concept of nature and the other that resorts to needless exaggerations of it. As with the first opposition, however, despite all their failings they each offer a vital component of the good imitation of nature. He writes

> Zu einer guten Kopie der Natur gehört beides, eine *edelmütige Kühnheit*, ihr Mark auszusaugen und ihre Schwungkraft zu erreichen, aber zugleich eine *schüchterne Blödigkeit*, um die grassen Züge, die sie sich in großen Wandstücken erlaubt, bei Miniatürgemälden zu mildern. (NA XX, 82)

Although it is the task of the poet to copy nature, English and French theatrical models have proven to be remarkably inept at doing so appropriately. For Schiller the poet needs to balance extracting the essence of nature, symbolized here as the bone marrow that the French lack, with maintaining an ideal distance from reality so as to render it useful for human aesthetic desires. Schiller continues with an analogy that portrays human beings as ants in a palace that they are unable to fully appreciate. The palace, which represents unfiltered reality, is too immense to be viewed in all its grandeur from the perspective of an ant. The poet’s task is to represent reality in a diminished form that is suitable for human subjectivity, so that “er bereitete uns von der Harmonie des Kleinen auf die Harmonie des Großen,” (NA XX, 83). Schiller’s solution ultimately mirrors the task of the ideal poet, since he too is bringing harmony to opposing poetic philosophies in the same way the poet is bringing harmony to the work of art.

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[106]Lessing refers to English acting practices in the days of Aaron Hill as “ein wenig sehr unnatürlich,” by which he means the same instances of theatrical excess that Schiller discusses: “besonders war ihr tragisches Spiel äußerst wild und übertrieben; wo heftige Leidenschaften auszudrücken hatten, schrien und geberdeten sie sich als Besessene.“ Schiller references this same section later in his essay in a different context. See Lessing, *Werke und Briefe*, *Bd. 6*, 260.

The third opposition shifts from faulting the poet for writing poor drama to pointing out the problems that emerge from the performance itself. Based on the assertion in the first opposition that marionettes could replace actors, one might conclude that Schiller has little interest in the corporeality of actors. Yet how a play is acted is equally critical for Schiller, who spends much of the remaining essay focusing on the significance of theatrical performance. As with Lessing, who remained unsatisfied with both Francesco Riccoboni's *Reflexionsschauspieler* and Pierre Rémond de Sainte Albine's *Gefühlsschauspieler*, Schiller also views the polarization of the theater between these two styles as the chief obstacle to successful acting. Schiller describes his version of the ideal actor as "Einmal muß er sich selbst und die horchende Menge vergessen, um in der Rolle zu leben; dann muß er wiederum sich selbst und den Zuschauer gegenwärtig denken, auf den Geschmack des letztern reflektieren und die Natur mäßigen," (NA XX, 83). Schiller doesn't take a clear side in the debate, admitting that the ideal actor utilizes both. Once again, Schiller sets up two extremes that appear irreconcilable, and presents the opposition in a similar manner as the same as the problem of the poet depicting nature: the creation and preservation of the vitality that *Natur* provides, and also the control of that very same *Natur*. The actor creates the impression of naturalism by removing himself from the artifice of production, completely taking on the role of the character, forgetting himself and the audience. At the same time, the actor's performance needs to be distanced from his nature, and controlled by reflection. Schiller's initial intervention into the paradox found in contemporary acting debates involves relinquishing control over the performance while maintaining it at the same time—a kind of guided spontaneity that synthesizes the emotionalist and anti-emotionalist schools of acting. Schiller laments that in most performances spontaneity is sacrificed for the sake of control, an observation that Lessing also makes.[107]

[107]"Zehnmal finde ich das erste dem zweiten aufgeopfert" (NA XX, 83).

Despite its similarities to the second opposition, the paradox of the actor presents more of a challenge. The chief issue of the second opposition in Schiller's mind is that both sides are unaware of the misguided assumptions of their own position and therefore fail to acknowledge that there is a problem. Once poets recognize the correct aesthetic principles that Schiller prescribes, the execution of these aesthetic principles should constitute no barrier in and of itself. In the case of actors, however, the means of synthesizing the opposition, both forgetting oneself and reflecting, is a true contradiction. Polarization of positions exists on account of the belief that both spontaneity and control are irreconcilable. While it is not difficult on his part to merely claim that the solution to the paradox of the actor lies in the "Genie des Akteurs" (NA XX, 83) who can overcome the contradictions in acting, Schiller instead draws upon his background in medicine and provides an anthropological model that gestures towards a more substantial solution to this problem.

> Von Empfindung zum Ausdruck der Empfindung herrscht eben die schnelle und ewigbestimmte Succession, als von Wetterleuchten zu Donnerschlag, und bin ich des Affekts voll, so darf ich so wenig den Körper nach seinem Tone stimmen, dass es mir vielmehr schwer, ja unmöglich werden dörfte, den freiwilligen Schwung des letztern zurückzuhalten. Der Schauspieler befindet sich einigermaßen im Fall eines Nachtwandlers, und ich beobachte zwischen beiden eine merkwürdige Ähnlichkeit. Kann der letztere bei einer *anscheinenden* völligen Abwesenheit des Bewusstseins, in der Grabesruhe der äußeren Sinne, auf seinem mitternächtlichen Pfade mit der unbegreiflichsten Bestimmtheit jeden Fußtritt gegen die Gefahr abwägen, die die größeste Geistesgegenwart des Wachenden auffodern würde – Kann die *Gewohnheit* seine Tritte so wunderbar sichern, kann – wenn wir doch, um das Phänomen zu erklären, zu etwas *mehr* unsere Zuflucht nehmen müssen – kann eine *Sinnesdämmerung*, eine superfizielle und flüchtige Bewegung der Sinne soviel zustande bringen: warum sollte der Körper, der doch sonst die Seele in allen ihren Veränderungen so getreulich begleitet, in diesem Falle so zügellos über seine Linien schweifen, dass er ihren Ton mißstimmte? (NA XX, 83-84)

Schiller's use of sleepwalking as a model for the actor has been interpreted as his support of a version of de Sainte Albine's *Gefühlsschauspieler*.[108] This line of interpretation highlights this passage as a continuation of his third dissertation, "Über den Zusammenhang der Thierischen Natur des Menschen mit seiner Geistigen," in which Schiller explores the corporeal manifestations of mental disorder, a phenomenon known today as psychosomatic illnesses. In the course of the dissertation Schiller relies heavily on literary examples, particularly from drama and dramaturgical texts to illustrate his points. Indeed, Schiller even juxtaposes acting and sleepwalking in his dissertation as instances of persistent corporeal and psychic harmony. Schiller treats Lady Macbeth, who while sleepwalking reveals her guilty conscience with a frantic delirium, in the same breath as David Garrick, who after his performance of King Lear or Othello, had to linger in bed to recover from the physical manifestations of imitating affects.[109] Implicit in this interpretation, the automatic processes between the soul and body enable a kind of automation of the actor on the stage, in which the actor assumes the subjectivity of the character and at the same time loses the critical distance that inhibits the maximum potential of a performance.

This interpretation, although fairly convincing, fails to account for some of the more intricate observations Schiller makes about sleepwalking. I instead propose that the notion of somnambulistic acting is at odds with his dissertation in several ways. First, Schiller is primarily

[108]Foremost of this view is Jörg Robert, who interprets this passage as Schiller's endorsement of "die Feuer-Position" of acting, in which the affective expression is caused by an affective state. Herbert Stubenrauch takes a more compromising perspective when he briefly mentions Schiller's *Nachtwandler* to the extent that he is "zwischen Selbstvergessenheit und dennoch nicht eingeschläfertem Umweltsbewußtsein." See Robert *Vor der Klassik: Die Ästhetik Schillers zwischen Karlschule und Kant-Rezeption* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011), 386-387; and Stubenrauch "Schiller und die Schauspieler. Ein unveröffentlichter Brief Ifflands vom 19. Januar 1785" in *Jahrbuch der Schillergesellschaft*, Vol. 2 (1958), 45.

[109]NA XX, 61. For an account of the eighteenth century's perception of the health concerns arising from acting, See Gloria Flaherty's "Dangers of New Sensibilities in Eighteenth Century German Acting" in *Theater Research International*, Vol. 8:2 (1983), 95-109.

interested in reconciling the opposition between *Gefühls*- and *Reflexionsschauspieler*, as opposed to taking sides on the issue. Although he admits that the emotionalist actor is the more difficult of the two standard models of acting, to claim that it ought to be privileged over the anti-emotionalist one would effectively undermine his original point, as well as the general spirit of his essay, that the ideal actor requires elements of both. Second, sleepwalking in this passage problematizes the interaction between body and soul rather than substantiating it. Schiller is not deterred by a lack of a working conception of body-soul interaction, and instead assumes there is an interaction as a regulative function in order to carry out his investigation of the actor's body.[110] This interaction forms the basis for the greatest problem facing the actor attempting to depict affective expression. Just as thunder necessarily follows lightning, the problem with real affects on the stage is they produce semiotic changes in the body that resist intentionality. They cannot be caused, and when they do occur, their corporeal manifestations cannot be easily controlled. Schiller's reliance on figurative language, rendering the mechanisms of the body in terms of weather phenomena ("Wetterleuchten zu Donnerschlag") and musical attunement ("nach seinem Ton stimmen"; "er ihren Ton mißstimmte"), is a testament to how opaque these corporeal processes are. The musical metaphor aptly demonstrates what is at stake: the need for disharmony. While harmonious correspondence of the corporeal expression with the soul is able to produce desirable affective signs for the stage, at the same time it interferes with successful acting by presenting the issue of bodily control.[111] Furthermore, as phenomena that defy

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[110]This was the subject of his failed first dissertation, *Philosophie der Physiologie*, in which he proposes a *Mittelkraft* that can explain the interactions of body and soul. By his third dissertation he assumed the interaction of the body and soul without the use of the *Mittelkraft*. Wolfgang Riedel proposes it is quite likely that the *Mittelkraft* was the chief fault of *Philosophie der Physiologie,* and its untenability led him to discard the notion. See Riedel *Die Anthropologie des jungen Schiller: Zur Ideengeschichte der medizinischen Schriften und der "Philosophischen Briefe"* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neuman, 1985), 100-106.

[111]Diderot also uses the music metaphor in his description of the same issue in *The Paradox of the Actor* "A great actor is neither a pianoforte, nor a harp, nor a harpsichord, nor a violin, nor a cello; he has no harmony of his own,

expectation and control, the images of lightning and thunder become the quintessential means for thinkers discussed in this dissertation to conceptualize corporeal spontaneity.

Schiller's use of the word *freiwillig* requires a brief exposition. In the modern German usage, *freiwillig* means voluntary, that which is done out of free will. Even in Schiller's own time, *freiwillig* still retains this meaning.[112] Yet voluntary is precisely the opposite of how it is used here. *Freiwillig* is associated with bodily paralysis in regard to intentionality when faced with affect. In this sense it means the involuntary or the spontaneously since the body's reaction is not determined by the will. A word such as *freiwillig* can mean both voluntary and involuntary because of the ambiguous relationship between *frei* and *willig*. An action can demonstrate freedom *of* the will but the spontaneity of affects is an instance of freedom *from* the will, or acting as if the affects had their own will.[113] "Spontaneity" captures both of these meanings, since it recognizes both the capacity of a human agent to act in a causal sequence and the same agent's ineffectiveness to alter things that are not subject to his will. Thus this word encapsulates the problem of the actor and the two forms of spontaneity: how can someone exercise their will in such a way that it affects things that are necessarily independent of it? *Freiwillig* will continue

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but he can assume the harmony and tone which fits his part, and he can lend his talent to all of them […] such men are rare, as rare as, and perhaps greater than, a poet." Denis Diderot and Geoffrey Bremner, *Selected Writings on Art and Literature* (London; New York: Penguin Books, 1994), 133.

[112]Zedler defines *freiwillig* as "alles mit gutem Vorbedacht und Willen / Vorbewust / ungezwungen und mit Überlegung abgehandelt worden." See Zedler, Johann Heinrich: *Großes Vollständiges Universal-Lexikon aller Wissenschaft und Künste*, *Bd. 9* (Halle: Zedler, 1734), 1,897.

[113]The double meaning of this word has led to some translation issues. A recent English translation of *Über Anmut und Würde* has "freiwilliges Werk der Natur" as "voluntary work of nature," which could be misleading, since Schiller's intention in the passage is to demonstrate how grace is involuntary (See *Schiller's "On Grace and Dignity" and its Cultural Context,* ed. Jane V. Curran and Christophe Fricker, 138). This is quite understandable, and not necessarily misguided since nature in this case is acting voluntarily, in that it is subject to its own rules, but is also involuntary because it is independent of the will. Elizabeth M. Wilkinson and L.A. Willoughby in their monumental dual-language edition of *Über die Ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen* translate a similar phrase, "Werk der freiwilligen Natur" into the more appropriate "workings of spontaneous nature." See Wilkinson and Willoughby in *Friedrich Schiller On the Aesthetic Education of Man in a Series of Letters* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1967), 4-5.

to appear to be used in this way in the subsequent texts discussed in this chapter: *Der Geisterseher*, “Kalliasbriefe,” and *Über Anmut und Würde*.

The sleepwalker, Schiller’s solution to the paradox of the actor, is an instance in which harmony of the body and soul is decoupled—it is an *exception* to this harmony, and not an example of it. For Schiller the sleepwalker severs the inexorable connection between affective interior state and exterior expression because the law of “ewigbestimmte Succession” does not bind him in the same way that thunder always following lightning. The model of sleepwalking thus provides actors with two advantages—one of containment and one of production. First, liberating the body from its status as an automatic indicator of an affective state removes the risk of containing a lingering affect—when an actor becomes subject to the spontaneity of his body. Second and more critical, sleepwalking is a means for the body to both move autonomously and to have that movement *appear* as if it were determined by a conscious state. The sleepwalker is able to perform the same movements in a state of diminished consciousness as if he were fully cognizant. In this state the sleepwalker is unaware of his environment but behaves as if he were. Returning to his musical metaphor, the sleepwalker’s contribution to the art of acting is its demonstration of how the body and soul can be brought out of tune (*missstimmen*). Schiller’s reasoning appears to be that if the body is capable of generating those movements without the assistance of consciousness, then there should theoretically be a way to overcome the natural correspondence of the body and soul.

However, there seems to be a significant leap in Schiller’s logic. If Schiller is primarily interested in overcoming the precarious relationship between actors and affective expressions, then the chief example he provides, the certainty with which sleepwalkers walk, is problematic. Sleepwalking has very little to do with affective expressions but rather with consciously intended

movements. Indeed, consciously intended movements and affective expressions are typically at odds with one another.[114]

One possible solution to reconcile these opposing principles is to recognize a significant commonality between consciously intended movements and affective expressions, namely that both result in corporeal expressions that are caused by an interior state. Schiller is likely operating under the assumption that during sleep all interior states, including both intentionality and affect, are non-operational. Theoretically this would mean that when someone sleeps there shouldn't be corresponding expressions in the body, since these expressions would effectively lack a cause. If he can demonstrate that sleepwalking can produce the appearance of intended movements—without them being actually intended—then the same logic could apply to affective expressions. During sleep, genuine affects are not present, yet the body is able to produce affective expressions as if they were. By this reasoning, sleepwalking for Schiller becomes, as I argued in my first chapter, what tickling represents for Lessing. Schiller is likewise not proposing that actors actually sleepwalk on the stage but rather advocating that the sleepwalker can serve as a model by which to better comprehend enigmatic corporeal mechanisms. This anthropological exploration into the automatic processes of the human body can be in turn extrapolated onto the art of acting. Schiller is contributing to a discourse that seeks to discover the capabilities of the body, pushing the limits of knowledge about the body to actualize its maximum potential.[115]

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[114]This is possibly what Peter-André Alt means when he describes the image of the sleepwalker as "nicht recht passend" for Schiller's project. Alt, *Schiller. Leben – Werk – Zeit, Erster Band* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2000), 373.

[115]It isn't inconsequential that Spinoza, whose theory of affect provided Lessing and Mendelssohn much food for thought, was also concerned with the abstruse nature of sleepwalking. He writes in his *Ethics* "For indeed, no one has yet determined what the body can do, that is, experience has not yet taught anyone what the body can do from the laws of Nature alone, insofar as Nature is only considered to be corporeal, and what the body can do only if it is determined by the mind. For no one has yet come to know the structure of the body so accurately that he could explain all its functions-not to mention that many things are observed in the lower animals which far surpass human

Schiller and Lessing's solutions to the paradox of the actor differ, however, in one substantial way. Whereas Lessing sought alternative forms of harmonious interaction to cause the spontaneity of affect through a theory of mediating gestures, his solution never deals with the issue of containing affects. This is at least partially a concern for Schiller in this essay. Even in *Miss Sara Sampson* the harmonious interaction between body and soul is assumed to be an unalterable rule of the game, which leads Marwood to manipulate the instances that permit the alteration of the state of the soul. Instead of assuming harmony, which for Schiller is a potential obstacle for good acting, he questions whether there might be exceptions to the mechanisms of affective expression. For this reason he turns to sleepwalking, which for him represents a peculiar moment in which the interaction between the body and the soul dissolve.

In addition to allowing the actor to achieve more control over the body through a diminished conscious state, the subjectivity of sleepwalking provides another advantage. As outlined in his attempt to synthesize the *Gefühls*- and the *Reflexionsschauspieler*, there are two aspects that any actor needs to attend to: his relationship to his *own body* and his relationship to the *audience*. The model of sleepwalking can not only reconcile the contradictions between affective state and expression, but can also eliminate other undesirable effects of consciousness—such as the impact the audience can have on the performer. The moment of audience awareness on the stage, which Schiller recalls from a performance in which an actor playing Romeo realized "*Man beobachtet mich*!" leads invariably to the "Sturz des Nachtwandlers" and "Der erschrockene Spieler stand steif und albern – die natürliche Grazie der Stellung entartete in eine Beugung – als ob er sich eben ein Kleid wollte anmessen lassen. – Die Sympathie der Zuschauer verpuffte in ein Gelächter," (NA XX, 284). The actor's relationships to

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ingenuity, and that sleepwalkers do a great many things in their sleep which they would not dare to awake. This shows well enough that the body itself, simply from the laws of its own nature, can do many things which its mind wonders at." *A Spinoza Reader*, 155-56.

his body and to the audience mirror each other. Just as conspicuous artifice disrupts the theatrical illusion for the audience, knowledge of the audience's presence can just as easily interfere with the art of the actor. With a diminished conscious state of a sleepwalker, an actor is able to effectively erect a fourth wall in his mind so that he can perform as if no one is watching. Schiller's acting aesthetic remains thoroughly in the natural acting paradigm that relies on a particular paradox of the theater: by ignoring the audience the actor is able to affect them more substantially. The same reasoning applies to the actor: by ignoring the audience he can better become caught in his own theatrical illusion.[116] In addition, by positing the inverse proportional relationship between grace ("die natürliche Grazie") and consciousness and intentionality, Schiller presages his treatise *Über Anmut und Würde*, extending the domain of corporeal spontaneity from purely affective to aesthetic states.

Schiller's notion of somnambulistic acting unfortunately leaves more questions than answers. Is it possible to sever the link between affective state and expression and at the same time transfer control of those expressions to the will? Is the will even operative under the model of the sleepwalker, and if not, what are the mechanisms for control of the body? Since "Über das gegenwärtige teutsche Theater" is an essay written in the tradition of the *Sturm und Drang*, to expect it to provide a developed and systematic account of acting would be misguided. Although Schiller does not explain how to take on the subjectivity of a sleepwalker for the purposes of performance, his chief aim is to reveal how the sleepwalker demonstrates that the laws of succession that supposedly inhibit the best kinds of affective expression are not inviolable. Regardless of Schiller's lack of feasible methodology for aspiring actors, the sleepwalker serves

[116]Christopher Wild also discusses this double illusion of Schiller's somnambulistic actor, in which he considers the disruption of the theatrical illusion and subsequent "Fall" in terms of the theater's attempts to come to terms with itself as a fallen medium. See Wild "Grazie und Gravitation: Vom Zug des Sündenfalls im Theater des 18. Jahrhundert" in *figurationen,* No. 1 Vol. 3*,* 33-35.

as a model to demonstrate the similarity between that state and the ideal actor: the disharmony between soul and body.

Schiller's solution to the paradox of the actor appears at first to have a troubled relationship with his methodology in this essay as a whole. The subjectivity of sleepwalking enables the actor to produce the appearance of spontaneity, in this case, affective expression, by decoupling the automated mechanisms from affective state and expression. In this act of decoupling, however, Schiller effectively sacrifices one kind of harmony for another. The fundamental disharmony resides within the actor's body, so that a corporeal expression no longer signifies an interior state of the actor, but rather a depicted emotional state of the character. As demonstrated in his use of the music metaphor, the goal of the actor is to be out of tune. In addition, the disharmony of the actor's body and soul serves as the foundation of a greater harmony: the reconciliation of the two modes of acting, the *Gefühls*- and the *Reflexionsschauspieler*.

This seemingly suspect foundation does not pose any immediate issues for Schiller. The ultimate aim is not the harmony of the stage in itself, but rather how the harmonizing of opposing positions functions as a method with which to improve the current stage of the German theater. For this reason there is no contradiction in using disharmony of the actor's body and soul to enable the greater harmony of the stage. As will become apparent in subsequent sections of this chapter, the assumption of the disharmony of the actor remains a constant feature of Schiller's thought. By the time he writes *Der Geisterseher*, the actor's use of disharmony to create the appearance of spontaneity will produce some problematic implications that inform his aesthetic theories into the 1790s.

Complications of Acting: Der Geisterseher

Written in three installments from 1787 to 1789, *Der Geisterseher* was a reluctant project for Schiller, a text he considered to be without literary merit. The public's demand for more suspense and intrigue, as well as the financial incentive gained by pandering to their interests, compelled him to continue to write additional installments.[117] Despite never achieving Schiller's desired level of artistic integrity, *Der Geisterseher* is certainly a productive text when viewed as a commentary on the theater. Filled with numerous theatrical allusions, from the constant references to the performativity of roles, to the dialogues between characters that read like drama scripts, *Der Geisterseher* instantiates many of the concerns of eighteenth-century German theater and acting. Most importantly, the text also reveals Schiller's development of the discourse of corporeal spontaneity, which explores the manipulation of spontaneous signs for the purposes of a theatrical illusion. Yet unlike his essay "Über das gegenwärtige teutsche Theater," Schiller's unfinished novel isn't concerned with theorizing how to extend one's control into spontaneous corporeal mechanisms. Rather, *Der Geisterseher* assumes the reality of Schiller's ideal actor and reveals its startling implications. Ultimately, *Der Geisterseher* problematizes the disharmony of the ideal actor when he is used in service to staging spontaneity by demonstrating how this can lead to deception and skepticism.

The first two installments of *Der Geisterseher* are an account of a German prince by his companion the Count von O., while he is traveling incognito in eighteenth-century Venice. The first installment begins when the prince and the count notice a masked man in traditional Armenian dress maintaining a close watch on their movements. Unable to lose the mysterious

[117]Letter to Körner March 6, 1788: "Dem verfluchten Geisterseher kann ich bis diese Stunde kein Interesse abgewinnen; welcher Dämon hat mir ihn eingegeben!" (NA XXV, 24); and March 17, 1788: "Der Geisterseher, den ich eben jezt fortsetze, wird schlecht – schlecht, ich kann nicht helfen; es gibt wenige Beschäftigungen, […] bei denen ich mir eines sündlichen Zeitaufwands so bewußt war, als bei dieser Schmiererei. Aber bezahlt wird es nun einmal, und ich habe wirklich bei der ganzen Sache auf Göschens Vortheil gesehen." (NA XXV, 30)

follower in the tumult of St. Mark's Square during Carnival, the masked man eventually confronts the two travelers, calling the prince by his true name and issuing a cryptic prophecy that later appears to come true. Searching for an explanation for this eerie occurrence, but finding none, the Count and Prince happen upon a troupe of young actors, who beckon them to join in the festivities. One of the actresses silences the crowd and places a crown upon the head of the Prince, calling out, "ein König ist unter uns," as if she knew his true identity. The Count is baffled by the spectacle and is unable to reconcile its clearly rehearsed elements with the affective spontaneity of the actress. Before long their group grows into a diverse international cohort, including an English lord, a Russian officer, a French abbé, among others, and they leave the actor troupe and settle down for a meal. One of the newcomers, a Sicilian from Palermo, informs the group that he knows of a way to contact the dead, a spectacle the cohort eagerly desires to witness. During the course of the evening the cohort summons the ghost of a deceased friend of the Prince. All of a sudden the séance takes an unexpected turn and another ghost confronts the group. The Sicilian, who functions as the medium for the séance, falls unconscious at the sight of this unforeseen visitor. When the ghost vanishes, the Sicilian awakes from his fainting spell and is unable to identify where he is. Glancing at the Russian, who had earlier dismissed him as a mere illusionist, the Sicilian screams, and again falls unconscious to the floor.[118]

The Sicilian's spontaneous affective reaction in the final lines takes on significance in the second installment of *Der Geisterseher* beyond mere melodramatic entertainment, when its inscrutability becomes a central issue in a discussion between the Prince and the Count. Attempting to deal with the consequences of what they perceived at the séance, their dialogue

[118]Such an abrupt cliffhanger likely left Schiller's reading public on the edge of their seats, as attested to by the Prince of Coburg's request to Schiller of an advanced copy of the second installment. See Schiller's letter to Körner, March 3, 1787 (NA XXIV, 84).

examines whether the events experienced by the two were in fact staged, a view endorsed by the Prince, or were a product of coincidence and thus genuine, a view supported by the Count. Assuming the Prince's interpretation of the events is correct, the first installment of *Der Geisterseher* is an awe-inspiring portrayal of the staging of spontaneity.[119] Every moment that at first glance appeared spontaneous and incidental, from the actor troupe and the affected street-actress to the Sicilian losing control of the séance, to the appearance of an unexpected ghost, was in fact a part of an elaborate conspiracy to appropriate the signs normally associated with spontaneity. The appearance of spontaneity functions as tool of persuasion, since by definition it falls outside of the confines of a "script" and thus is able to convey a sense of the unexpected and authenticity. The Prince even conceives of the ruse in theatrical terms, referring to the events as a "Gaukelspiel" and a product of "Taschenspieler" and "Gaukler" who used the Sicilian as a kind of puppet ("Puppe") to ensnare the Prince into their trap.[120] The ostensible goal of the conspiracy—to make it appear that a supernatural or divine force was at work in the Prince's life—seemingly fails to have an immediate impact on the Prince's disposition, since he views the entire event as staged.

The Count's account of the séance demonstrates the extent to which those responsible for the hoax were willing to appropriate spontaneous signs in order to convince the Prince of their veracity. In this scene the first ghost, on the cusp of revealing his unfinished business to his former friend, the Prince, is interrupted by several unforeseen occurrences:

"In einem Kloster auf der flandrischen Grenze lebt – – –"

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[119]Gail Hart discusses a similar issue in the dynamic between determination and the freedom in *Der Geisterseher*, in which she explores the extent to which the Prince's actions are narrated so as to give the illusion of free will. Hart finds compelling analogues for this dynamic in contemporary video games. See Hart "Save the Prince: Schiller's *Geisterseher* and the Lure of Entertainment," *Goethe Yearbook* Vol. 18 (2011), 245-58.

[120]This is only a small sampling of the theatrical language from this dialogue. See particularly NA XVI, 94-98.

> Hier erzitterte das Haus von neuem. Die Türe sprang freiwillig unter einem heftigen Donnerschlag auf, ein Blitz erleuchtete das Zimmer, und eine andere körperliche Gestalt, blutig und blaß wie die erste, aber schrecklicher, erschien an der Schwelle. Der Spiritus fing von selbst an zu brennen, und der Saal wurde helle wie zuvor. (NA XVI, 61)

This moment consists of a series of signs intended to attest to the spontaneity of the event: the interruption of the ghost's revelation,[121] the trembling of the house, the unexpected and involuntary (*frewillig*) opening of the door, the sudden appearance of weather phenomena. Not insignificant is Schiller's juxtaposition of *frewillig* with thunder and lightning, images which he employed to convey the spontaneity of an actor's affect in "Über das gegenwärtige teutsche Theater." The appearance of a second ghost is furthermore coupled with another unrehearsed display: spontaneous (*von selbst an*) combustion. Yet as much as these indicate an absence of premeditation, the use of *freiwillig* reveals the hidden and staged nature of the events. *Freiwillig,* in the sense that the Count intends—sudden and unexpected—correlates with the other images. Given the Prince's understanding of these events as part of an elaborate hoax, however, *freiwillig* can also be understood according to its second and more conventional meaning—voluntary—since in reality the action had been intended all along. The term *freiwillig* in this passage effectively plays upon the paradox of staging spontaneity at stake in *Der Geisterseher*.

Returning to the dialogue, the Count doesn't initially share the Prince's skepticism and is inclined to believe in the authenticity of the events. After pointing out in numerous examples the improbability of successful planning and implementation of the alleged conspiracy,[122] each of

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[121]Ursula Regener sees *Der Geisterseher* as inundated with acts of interruption from the conversations that end in dashes to the installments that often stop in the middle of events. She draws comparisons with Schiller's own acts of frequently discontinuing and recommencing work on the novel. See Regener "Zufall oder Intention: Zum verborgenen Plan von Schillers *Geisterseher*" in *Critica Poetica: Lesarten zur deutschen Literatur* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1992), 125-38.

[122]Notably, the Count asserts that even a dramatist who lacked the knowledge of Aristotle's three unities could not have fabricated such an elaborate plot (NA XVI, 94).

which the Prince is able to explain through natural causes, the Count reveals a potential trump card as his evidence: spontaneity of affect.

> Ich kann es demungeachtet noch nicht über mich gewinnen, gnädigster Herr, diese ganze Sache für nichts mehr als ein angestelltes Spiel zu halten. Wie? Der Schrecken des Sizilianers, die Zuckungen, die Ohnmacht, der ganze klägliche Zustand dieses Menschen, der uns selbst Erbarmen einflößte – alles dieses wäre nur eine eingelernte Rolle gewesen? Zugegeben, dass sich das theatralische Gaukelspiel auch noch so weit treiben lasse, so kann die Kunst des Akteurs doch nicht über die Organe seins Lebens gebieten (NA XVI 98).

One of the most convincing moments of the event, the affective response of the Sicilian that had ended the first installment, persuades the Count that at least some of the events could have been genuine. In contrast to the Prince's contention that the coincidental encounters were in fact staged to give the impression of spontaneity, the Sicilian's affective signs lie outside of human intention and could not possibly have been dissimulated. According to the Count, the corporeal signs the Sicilian used to display horror—convulsions and fainting—are evidence that he must have truly believed he saw the ghost. For the Count, affect demonstrates the limits of representation for the theater, since even actors fail to exert such an exact control over their bodies.

The Prince, who at this point in the novel is the voice of calm materialist reason, responds with his characteristic skepticism during this dialogue. David Garrick, the most renowned actor of his day both in and outside of Britain, could indeed produce such a realistic appearance of affect, and his performances routinely astonished audiences throughout his career, as the Prince had himself witnessed while seeing him act in *Richard III*. In exposing the actor's capacity to feign affective signs, the Prince effectively plays Socrates, pulling the rug out from under the Count's naïve observations. In the end, both are in agreement that the event was staged, although they are still confused as to what end.

The Prince's discovery of the staged nature of the past events only partially reveals the plot around him. Indeed, the discovery itself is, unbeknownst to him, part of the script. The plot of the first two installments of *Der Geisterseher* exhibits four levels of staging, essentially a play within a play within a play within a play. The first level is the original intention of the séance, which creates the appearance of contacting the ghost. This level is recognized by most of the participants of the séance, who were expecting pretense to an illusion.[123] The second level of staging, as later revealed in the Sicilian's "confession" are the events surrounding the séance, namely the encounter with the troupe of actors. The third level is the moment the séance appears to derail. The audience is suddenly confronted with a seemingly spontaneous moment which forces them to revaluate their preconceived notions about the event. The appearance of spontaneity has the ability to take an illusion to its maximum effectiveness. Only upon closer analysis does the Prince recognize the artifice behind all these actions. The final level of staging involves how the third level produces a kind of skepticism in the Prince's thought process. The revelation that spontaneity was planned all along does not invalidate any possible effect. The Prince believes that recognizing the second level of deception makes him immune from its effects, but this is just the third level of the conspiracy. The Prince's skeptical thought process was a part of the plan all along: pushing him to a libertine lifestyle to enable his conversion to Catholicism.

The Prince's recognition that the staging of the séance was made possible by actors' ability to feign corporeal spontaneity has two significant consequences. First, by revealing how the logic of the theater can be extrapolated to matters in the outside world, the specter of Rousseau's arguments against the theater once again appears. Instead of endorsing the theater,

[123]Before the séance the Englishman betrays his concern to the Count that the Prince "sich mit einem Betrüger einläßt" (NA XVI, 57).

Schiller is indirectly supporting *Theaterfeindlichkeit* by having *Der Geisterseher* instantiate the Rousseauian fears that acting methods cannot be confined to the theater and will necessarily lead to deception, ultimately serving nefarious purposes. Even though the Prince and the Count know the events are staged, this recognition doesn't save the Prince, because the effects of the staged events are so subliminal that even a perceptive observer such as the Prince is unable realize it.

Second, with the Prince's acknowledgment that a well-trained actor such as Garrick can give the impression of spontaneity through affective signs, *Der Geisterseher* reveals how the deliberate use of these signs in the long run effectively undermines their ability to appear spontaneous. The authenticity of affective signs is no longer a viable supposition in a world in which the theater has severed the inexorable link between psychological state and corporeal expression. The figure of the actor forces the Prince and the Count to question whether there are truly authentic signs at all, transforming the assumption of corporeal disharmony from a purely theatrical matter to a universal assumption about corporeal signs. Instead of leading to deception, the result is a general state of epistemological uncertainty and leads to the Prince's unremitting skepticism.

Whether an actor's disharmony leads to extra-theatrical deception or skepticism as to whether corporeal signs can ever be truly reliable, *Der Geisterseher* reveals some potentially disconcerting implications of the deliberate use of corporeal spontaneity, a topic he views without issue in his essay "Über das gegenwärtige teutsche Theater." Schiller takes into account these two concerns in his aesthetic undertakings in "Kalliasbriefe" and *Über Anmut und Würde*, two other texts in which actors and acting practices make an appearance.

Kalliasbriefe

In the years after *Der Geisterseher*, Schiller put aside the drama and prose fiction that engaged him the previous decade, and dedicated himself to aesthetic and philosophical questions such as the nature of beauty, the moral significance of the sublime, and the role of art in the development of the human race. His aesthetic writings the "Kalliasbriefe" and *Über Anmut und Würde*, however, are marked by his experience as a dramaturge, perhaps most clearly in his use of the figure of the actor as exemplary of aesthetic phenomena. Yet the actor is more than a figure of thought that links his aesthetic and theatrical enterprises. Many of Schiller's assumptions about the appearance of spontaneity from his theatrical writings are preserved and influence his definition of beauty from the "Kalliasbriefe." While "Kalliasbriefe" comments little on actual corporeal spontaneity, it draws its arguments from the same discourse of theatrical illusion, the original impetus for the question of corporeal spontaneity. The "Kalliasbriefe" can thus be viewed as the extension of the issues of spontaneity into the realm of aesthetics. "Kalliasbriefe" ultimately demonstrates the compatibility of the theatrical illusion of the natural acting paradigm and the aesthetic autonomy later associated with Weimar Classicism.

The "Kalliasbriefe" are a series of letters from Schiller to his friend and intellectual companion Körner, in which he attempts to explain and define the concept of beauty. Written in the winter of 1793, Schiller had intended that his correspondence with Körner would become the basis of a substantial book project on beauty called *Kallias oder Über die Schönheit*, which would have taken the form of a dialogue.[124] Due to Schiller's poor health the publication was postponed and never actualized, although much of its subject matter did resurface in his subsequent aesthetic writings. In the letters Schiller contends with Kant's prohibition in the

[124]Schiller hoped the project would become "ein ordentliches Buch von der Größe des Geisterseher." Unclear is whether by "Größe" he meant *Kallias* would reach the popularity of his unfinished novel or whether he was referring to the length of the book. See NA XXVI, 170-171.

Kritik der Urteilskraft of an objective definition of beauty. Beauty, Kant claims, is an aesthetic pleasure that is the result of subjective experience; beauty cannot likewise be reduced to objective qualifications because it emerges not with the application of concepts, but rather through the free play of the faculties. As such, beauty is detached from any truth claims. Although there are no objective characteristics that would define an object as beautiful, philosophy can deduce the cognitive processes that make the perception of beauty possible. These processes are universally applicable, in that they are required of all perceiving subjects to perceive something as beautiful. Despite being tremendously influenced by Kant's third critique, Schiller was deeply dissatisfied with the demarcation of beauty as subjectively determined and that its sole objective status was its claim to universal applicability. He thus struck out on his own against Kant to establish the objective conditions for beauty.

Schiller defines beauty as "Freiheit in der Erscheinung." As freedom in appearance, Schiller's definition at first seems to become caught in a contradiction. If the realm of freedom is self-determining and immaterial, and the realm of appearances is determined and material, how can anything appear free? How can beauty emerge out of a world that is causally determined and therefore in essence divorced from freedom? Although Schiller's definition of beauty as freedom in appearance is an attempt to reconcile the worlds of material determinacy and immaterial freedom demarcated by Kant, Schiller admits that it is truly difficult to link these two disparate realms. Schiller escapes this issue by claiming that freedom in appearance is not an expression of actual freedom of the will, but rather an analogue of it.[125] Just as the will can determine itself according to form, objects in the material world, if they appear as if they were self-determining,

[125]"Eine Willenshandlung kann der Freiheit nicht bloß analog, sie muß – oder soll wenigstens – wirklich frey sein. Hingegen kann eine mechanische Wirkung (jede Wirkung durchs Naturgesetz) nie als wirklich *frey*, sondern bloß der Freiheit analog beurtheilt werden," (NA XXVI, 180). Schiller repeats this formulation also in his letter from February 18th (NA XXVI, 192).

would be the appearance of freedom.[126] As an analogue, Schiller is effectively conceding that a definitive link between beauty and actual freedom only resides in the similarity of their form. The result is that while appearance cannot be used to deduce the actuality of freedom—the equivalent of using a posteriori knowledge to justify a priori knowledge—beauty can be deduced from the *appearance* of freedom, or its subjective apprehension. The terms of this division are clear: the appearance of freedom makes no claim about whether an object is actually self-determining.[127]

In order to fulfill his objective qualification of beauty, Schiller needs to go beyond merely claiming that beauty is the appearance of freedom, and to provide objective criteria for how an observing subject can recognize the appearance of freedom. The issue resides in deducing an object's determination. Since even the appearance of freedom is based on the assumption of self-determination, to which the senses do not have access, appearances cannot directly speak to whether something is self-determining. How can one know whether an object appears to be externally or internally determined, if internal determination cannot be seen? As a solution Schiller resorts to the time-tested method of process of elimination. Based on the assumption that all objects are determined, either by external or internal forces, one can infer self-determination by eliminating the possibility that external forces determine it.[128]

For a precise principle of determining the absence of external forces, Schiller augments his original definition of beauty with a complementary and equally paradoxical definition:

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[126]"Die Freiheit in der Erscheinung ist also nichts anders als die Selbstbestimmung an einem Dinge, insofern sie sich in der Anschauung offenbart" (NA XXVI, 192).

[127]Schiller also proposes a concept of moral beauty, covered largely in his letters to Körner on February 18th and 19th, in which he attempts to bridge the divide between appearances and moral actions. He discards this by the later letters, and I will thus restrict the scope of my inquiry to beauty in appearances.

[128]"Sobald also das Bestimmtsein gedacht wird, so ist das Nichtvonaußenbestimmtsein indirekte zugleich die Vorstellung des Voninnenbestimmtsein oder der Freiheit," (NA XXVI, 200-201).

“Natur in der Kunstmäßigkeit” or “Autonomie in der Technik.” Schiller’s additional definition of beauty takes a cue from Kantian ethics, in which positive freedom is the ability to impose rules upon one’s self.[129] In Schiller’s aesthetics, self-imposed rules occur when the form of an object appears to exert itself over material substance. If the form subordinates material substance, then the apperception of beauty is possible. As an empirical example that corresponds to his a priori claims, Schiller imagines two different vases: one that is long and slender and another that is shorter and fatter. The slender vase is beautiful because it appears to be less subject to the forces of nature, in this case gravity. The fatter one, on the other hand, appears to have succumbed to those forces. The slender vase appears to have imposed its own form against gravity. Even though vases are objects in nature and are thus not self-determining, it is only the appearance of freedom, as if it were self-determining, that is required for beauty. Schiller further illustrates this with multiple examples from the animal kingdom, in which larger and more clumsy creatures are regarded as not beautiful, such as elephants, bears, and bulls, while creatures whose mass is completely subjected to its form—such as birds in flight that can actually defy gravity—are more beautiful.[130] The examples of the vase and the bird in flight are instances of beauty that appear to be free without actually being free. The human being, the only entity that possesses true freedom of the will, is absent from the letter from February 23rd. Schiller does however admit to omitting examples of human beauty, since they would require their own letter.[131] In a certain sense this is

[129]Kant opposes positive freedom to the negative freedom of Locke and Hobbes, who define freedom as free from coercion or external influence.

[130]“Dagegen nehmen wir überall Schönheit wahr, wo *die Maße von der Form* und (im Thier- und Pflanzenreich) von den lebendigen Kräften (in die ich die Avtonomie des organischen setze) *völlig beherrscht* wird,” (NA XXVI, 205).

[131]Schiller writes to Körner: “Ich widerstehe der Versuchung, Dir an der menschlichen Schönheit die Wahrheit meiner Behauptungen noch anschaulicher zu machen; dieser Materie gebührt ein eigener Brief. Du ersiehst nun aus dem bißher gesagten, was ich zum Begriff der Natur (in ästhetischer Bedeutung) rechne und davon ausgeschloßen wissen will” (NA XXVI, 206).

Schiller's project in *Über Anmut und Würde*, although it is only a subset of beauty, grace, which applies specifically to human beings.

In his description of beauty, Schiller appeals more to a notion of freedom rather than nature, making his definition "Natur in der Kunstmäßigkeit" appear to be a misnomer. Schiller admits that his use of *Natur* as *Freiheit* is misleading, and he justifies it with the following:

> Der Ausdruck Natur ist mir darum lieber als *Freiheit*, weil er zugleich das Feld des Sinnlichen bezeichnet, worauf das Schöne sich einschränkt, und neben dem Begriffe der Freiheit auch sogleich ihre Sphäre in der Sinnenwelt andeutet. Der Technik gegenübergestellt, ist Natur, was durch sich selbst ist, Kunst ist, was durch eine Regel ist. *Natur in der Kunstmäßigkeit*, was sich selber die Regel gibt – was durch seine eigene Regel ist. (Freiheit in der Regel, Regel in der Freiheit.) (NA XXVI, 203)

The definition of beauty as *Freiheit in der Kunstmäßigkeit* would be virtually the same as human moral freedom and thus would not attend to some key differences between the two. The term *Natur* is preferable to *Freiheit* because it signifies both the world of appearances as a realm of pure causality, and also how freedom is present in the world of appearances because it is subject to its own forces rather than to the will. In other words, *Natur* contains the idea of freedom because it exists of its own accord and not because of an external intervention. By highlighting simultaneously involuntary and spontaneous aspects of aesthetic phenomena, *Natur* becomes another multi-functional word like *freiwillig*.

In the final letter from the "Kalliasbriefe," Schiller does provide a few human manifestations of beauty, which he views in conjunction with the beauty of art. Once again, beauty emerges when the form of an object subjugates the material substance. Since art operates under the principle of the imitation of nature, the relationship between form and material substance functions differently than with natural objects such as animals and plants. The beauty of art demands that the material substance loses itself in the form to the extent that an observer is

not reminded of the material substance.[132] Schiller first represents this in the marble statues of a human being. The material substance is marble, but as art its appearance transcends its constituting material and appears human. “Die Marmornatur,” writes Schiller “welche hart und spröd ist, muß in der Natur des Fleisches, welches biegsam und weich ist, völlig untergegangen seyn, und weder das Gefühl noch das Auge darf daran erinnert werden,” (NA XXVI, 225). The marble statue is contrasted to the way in which a single misplaced brick completely disrupts the entire form of an ornate column because it betrays the material substance instead of revealing the artistic idea, thereby obstructing its beauty.

For the most elaborate illustration of the relationship between form and material, Schiller turns to the art of acting. Acting illustrates three different outcomes when form and material substance interact, corresponding to the ideal actor, the mediocre actor, and the poor actor. Of the ideal actor Schiller writes:

> Wenn Eckhof oder Schröder den Hamlet spielten, so verhielten sich ihre *Personen* zu ihrer *Rolle* wie der Stoff zur Form, wie Körper zur Idee, wie Wirklichkeit zur Erscheinung. Eckhof war gleichsam der Marmor, aus dem sein Genie einen Hamlet formte, und weil seine (des Schauspielers) Person in der künstlichen Person Hamlets völlig untergieng, weil bloß die *Form* (der Carakter Hamlets) und nirgends der *Stoff* (nirgends die wirkliche Person des Schauspielers) zu bemerken war – weil alles an ihm bloß Form (bloß Hamlet) war, so sagt man er spielte schön. Seine Darstellung war im großen Stil, weil sie *erstlich* völlig objectiv war und nichts subjectives sich mit einmischte; *zweytens*, weil sie objectiv notwendig, nicht zufällig war (wovon die Erläuterung bei einer andern Gelegenheit.) (NA XXVI, 226).

As Schiller’s notion of beauty applies to actors, ideal actors are able to fully subjugate their own person to the role they are portraying in such a way that the material of the performance, the person of the actor, vanishes behind the dominance of the role.[133] An actor on par with Konrad

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[132]“Bei einem Kunstwerk also muß sich der *Stoff* (die Natur des Nachahmenden) in der *Form* (des Nachgeahmten), der *Körper* in der *Idee*, die *Wirklichkeit* in der *Erscheinung* verlieren,” (NA XXVI, 224).

[133]Schiller’s use of actors as paragons of beauty has unfortunately received scant treatment in scholarship. Two exceptions are Jörg Robert and Christopher Wild. Robert briefly treats this passage as a development of Schiller’s

Eckhof and Friedrich Ludwig Schröder can abstract their own idiosyncrasies to conform to an idea. Likewise, poor actors, who permit their own person to dominate the form of the character they are portraying, are not beautiful because they appear constrained by the medium of their performance. Once again, Schiller maintains that freedom in appearance cannot make claims to actual freedom. Yet this time he uses the art of actors to make this point. Eckhof is compared to the previous example of the marble statue, demonstrating that the addition of human subjectivity makes no difference in whether an object appears free or not and that human agents conform to the same qualifications as if they were inanimate objects or animals. Schiller points to the example of Herr Brückl, whose performances of kings are notable for their lack of conformity to the role, in which his person is dominant.[134] This leads to a paradoxical conclusion: a vase can have the appearance of spontaneity while in actuality possessing none, and the bad actor can appear not to be spontaneous while actually being so.

At this point the resemblance between Schiller's theory of beauty and the natural acting paradigm is unmistakable. The formulation "Natur in der Kunstmäßigkeit" is often found in various forms in contemporary acting discourse as the anti-emotionalist solution to the paradox of the actor.[135] For the anti-emotionalist actor, the affective expression can only be produced through artifice. Beauty, in which "das schöne Produkt darf und muß sogar regelmäßig seyn, aber es muß regelfrey erscheinen" (NA XXVI, 193), operates under the same paradox as the actor: how to intentionally create spontaneous gestures on the stage. Both strive to erase the

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reception of Bürger. Wild views the significance of the actor in the *Kalliasbriefe*, particularly Eckhof and Schröder, as an instance of self-creation that symbolizes the Biblical fall from grace is overcome and a second order nature is restored through *Kunst*. See Robert, *Vor der Klassik*, 387-88; and Wild, "Grazie und Gravitation," 40-42.

[134]Schiller conceives also of a third possibility: the mediocre actor, who neither adheres to the form of the role nor lets his own person emerge as dominant. Schiller has in mind Sophie Albrecht, whose rendition of Ophelia from *Hamlet* was her own arbitrary creation that neither adhered to the role nor her person.

[135]For two notable examples, see the discussion of Ekhof's academy from the introduction, as well as Lessings "In eines Schauspielers Stammbuch" which prefaces the first chapter.

artificiality behind the construction of the artwork and are thus embedded in the same illusion aesthetic as the theater. A single deviation from the form by the material substance, whether it is a misplaced brick in an arch or a miscalculation of an actor, betrays the artfulness and destroys the illusion. Furthermore, both beauty and the actor under the natural acting paradigm maintain this artifice by appropriating the appearance of spontaneity, or the appearance of self-determination. For the actor, affective expression is one of the foremost signifiers of spontaneity since its cause lies outside of the will; for beauty, self-determination is perceived if the form dominates the material substance. The correspondence between the two is further attested by Schiller's double use of *Natur*. Although the "nature" in "Natur in der Kunstmäßigkeit" initially refers to freedom, it at the same time applies to the kind of spontaneous appearance with which actors distract the audience from the theatricality of the spectacle. The appearance of spontaneity or nature is the freedom *from* the human will, and therefore no longer subject (or at least *appearing* to be subject) to the result of artifice.

By restricting beauty to the domain of appearance, Schiller does not have to attend to the issues that emerged in *Der Geisterseher*. In the act of constructing limits on underlying assumptions of beauty, Schiller is able to conceptually protect it from claims that it is subject to deception or leads to epistemological uncertainty. While the appearance of spontaneity of affect either betrays the affect state of a person or is the result of impressive corporeal mastery, the spontaneity required for beauty is a play strictly in the appearance of an object, meaning there can be no possible discrepancy in whether something *appears* or *is* beautiful. There is no other form of being for beauty other than in the realm of appearances, no disharmony between exterior and interior, and questions of feigned beauty do not emerge in the "Kalliasbriefe" as they will later with feigned grace in *Über Anmut und Würde*.

"Natur in der Kunstmäßigkeit," under which so many have conceived of the art of acting, is none other than a version of the concept of aesthetic autonomy. The similarity between aesthetic autonomy and the appearance of spontaneity is explicitly formulated in the following example from the "Kalliasbriefe."

> Schön ist ein Gefäß, wenn es, ohne seinem Begriff zu widersprechen, einem freien Spiel der Natur gleichsieht. Die Handhabe an einem Gefäß ist bloß des Gebrauchs wegen, also durch einen Begriff, da; soll aber das Gefäß schön sein, so muß diese Handhabe so ungezwungen und freiwillig daraus hervorspringen, dass man ihre Bestimmung vergisst. Ginge sie aber in einem rechten Winkel ab, verengte sich der weite Bauch plötzlich zu einem engen Halse und dergleichen, so würde diese abrupte Veränderung der Richtung allen Schein von Freiwilligkeit zerstören und die Autonomie der Erscheinung würde verschwinden. (NA XXVI, 212).

A jar, like any other piece of art, can be beautiful if it appears to be a work of nature, which requires that it lose the appearance of being externally determined. In the case of the jar, external determination is based on whether it appears to have a use, which would refer to an external hand in its creation. This reflects his earlier assertion that a beautiful object can display "keinen Einfluß des Stoffes oder eines Zweckes" and shows how Schiller integrates the issue of utility, a feature against which aesthetic autonomy defines itself, into the issue of determination. The handle (*Handhabe*) particularly endangers the perception of beauty because it exists only for its purpose, and thus readily can divulge its own artfulness. Yet if the handle appears spontaneous, subject to its own rules rather than created for an outside purpose, it can lead to the observer to forget the external determination, thereby enabling the perception of beauty. Any disruption of the appearance of spontaneity would therefore eliminate beauty.

Schiller in this passage is revealing that the rules governing the appearance of spontaneity and aesthetic autonomy are not only compatible, but also that aesthetic autonomy is potentially indebted to previous acting discourses. Accentuating the creation of the appearance of spontaneity erects a bridge between the imitation of nature and aesthetic autonomy. In the natural

acting paradigm, imitating nature is to erase the artifice of production and negate the beholder, to create the appearance that a beheld object is there on its own accord and could not have been intended. At the same time these values are at one with aesthetic autonomy, and its compatibility is evident in the "Kalliasbriefe." Schiller's early formulation of aesthetic autonomy is thus subject to its own aesthetics of illusion. Although aesthetic autonomy has its predecessors in Karl Philipp Moritz and Immanuel Kant, it has an even earlier predecessor in the natural acting paradigm, with Schiller drawing on his work in this field to conceive of beauty in terms that began with the actor's body. The exemplary status of the actor for beauty further betrays the lineage of Schiller's thought. The figure of the actor functions as an illustration for beauty because the logic according to which the ideal actor operates, the natural acting paradigm, is already serving as the model for Schiller's explanation of beauty. Schiller's definition of beauty is the natural acting paradigm by aesthetic means.

The affinity between the imitation of nature and aesthetic autonomy is surprising considering that Schiller will regard them as oppositional within ten years in his introduction to *Die Braut von Messina*. As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, "Über den Gebrauch des Chors in der Tragödie" jettisons any pretense to naturalism since it both violates aesthetic autonomy by subordinating art to nature and operates under the aesthetics of illusion. The difference is based on two different notions of autonomy: the natural acting paradigm relies on autonomy or spontaneous signs to diminish the theatricality of a performance, whereas under Weimar Classicism autonomy refers to the independence of art from nature. While the use of the chorus was an attempt to *highlight* the artifice of art—instead of to *conceal*—Schiller's reasoning here never fully breaks from considering autonomy on the basis of an illusion, and clear traces of his former paradigm remain. In his explication of the relationship between form

and content, Schiller writes "In einer höhern Organisation darf der Stoff oder das Elementarische nicht mehr sichtbar sein, die chemische Farbe verschwindet in der feinen Karnation des Lebendigen." (NA X, 12). To conceal the constitutive elements in favor of a higher form is little different than the actor Conrad Ekhof disguising his person for the sake of the character. In the end, the greatest illusion is the notion that the theatrical aesthetics of Weimar Classicism is a concise break with the natural acting paradigm. In reality the break was much less orderly than was suggested by its advocates, who perpetuated a myth of rupture in order to suppress its continuity and indebtedness.

Über Anmut und Würde

Only a few months after the *Kalliasbriefe*, Schiller published a treatise in the journal *Neue Thalia* that would develop and augment many of his arguments from his correspondence with Körner. *Über Anmut und Würde* examines grace as a particularly human manifestation of beauty, a state in which human spontaneity and the spontaneity of the body are not oppositional forces but rather harmoniously correspond. Like the "Kalliasbriefe," *Anmut und Würde* is another of Schiller's formidable projects that attempts to bridge the gap created by Kant between morality and aesthetics.[136] For all its philosophical ambition, *Anmut und Würde* takes many of its cues from the theater, not only exhibiting clear traces of the former natural acting paradigm, but also by its resemblance to Lessing's theory of acting. *Anmut und Würde* is the moment in which three critical points from the previously discussed texts converge—the disharmonious actor from

[136]The overwhelming opinion is that Schiller does not do this successfully. Käte Hamburger most prominently views Schiller's project as a misguided attempt that applies Winkelmann's aesthetics of antique art onto human beings. "Es war der Irrtum der Ästhetik und Anthropologie dieser Epoche, nicht nur zwischen Kunst und Leben nicht unterschieden zu haben, sonder überhaupt den Begriff des Schönen zum Kriterium der Seinsart der Kunst zu machen – und wir werden sehen, daß Schiller gerade deshalb an diesem Problem scheiterte" See Hamburger "Schillers Fragment 'der Menschenfeind" und die Idee der Kalokagathie" in *Deutsche Vierteljahrschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte*, Vol. 30 (1956), 378-9.

"Über das gegenwärtige teusche Theater," disharmony enabling deception and uncertainty in *Der Geisterseher*, and the conceptualization in the "Kalliasbriefe" of aesthetic phenomena in terms of the natural acting paradigm—with the concept of grace. This collision creates inconsistencies and contradictions in Schiller's own thought, which leads him to actively repress any notion of the theatricality of grace. Whereas in the "Kalliasbriefe" the figure of the actor was used to illustrate the concept of beauty, the disharmony prefigured in the actor represents both a systemic and moral threat to Schiller's notion of grace. Schiller's response to this threat is to continue his work from the "Kalliasbriefe": erecting limits to preserve his concepts. If the beauty of an actor's performance is made possible by restricting it to appearances, then grace—the harmony of appearances and reality—can only function by banning the theatrical.

Despite its richness in subject matter, addressing disparate issues such as human freedom and the nature of genius, gender and aesthetics, *Anmut und Würde* has never had the same degree of scholarly purchase as some of Schiller's other aesthetic texts.[137] The question of scholarly reception is pertinent because recognizing the assumptions brought to bear when interpreting Schiller's treatise assists in providing a better account of its neglected aspects. Scholarly literature of *Anmut und Würde* falls roughly into two camps: those that believe it reveals the progression of Schiller's aesthetic thought culminating a few years later in *Die Ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen in einer Reihe von Briefen*, and those that view its significance as an intervention into Kantian ethics. According to the first group, *Ästhetische Erziehung* is the

[137]Although not explicitly formulated, Lesley Sharpe's reception history of Schiller's aesthetic essays attests to a persistent lack of scholarly interest in *Über Anmut und Würde*. Fredrick Beiser aptly describes its reception as an "unwanted orphan," which even after the boom of Schiller scholarship starting in the 1950s failed to find much of an enthusiastic treatment on either side of the Atlantic. See Sharpe *Schiller's Aesthetic Essays: Two Centuries of Criticism* (Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1995) and Beiser *Schiller as Philosopher*, 77-79.

culmination of Schiller's aesthetic writings in the early 1790s.[138] Scholarship has accorded *Kalliasbriefe* and *Anmut und Würde* a transitional role, critical yet more forgettable stepping-stones leading up to the crown jewel of his aesthetic achievement. It must be admitted, however, that many of the summary judgments on the status of *Anmut und Würde* ring true. In more ways than one, *Anmut und Würde* is Schiller's attempt to work through aesthetic questions first raised in the *Kalliasbriefe* until they reach the level of refinement found in *Ästhetische Erziehung*. This teleological reading has clear limitations. Even though *Ästhetische Erziehung* develops some of the ideas in *Anmut und Würde,* there are many topics about which it falls silent, such as the actor's significance for aesthetic paradigms. Interpretations that render *Anmut und Würde* in terms of *Ästhetische Erziehung* are bound to accentuate the commonalities of the two, rather than emphasizing how *Anmut und Würde* develops on its own terms and intervenes in other forms of discourse. If the text is viewed teleologically, then those elements that never made it into *Ästhetische Erziehung* are not given their proper account and are treated as merely unfruitful dead ends.[139]

The second group stresses Schiller's active intervention into Kantian ethics.[140] Towards the end of the section on grace, Schiller takes issue with Kant's understanding of the relationship

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[138]For a notable example from the first half of the twentieth century, see H. A. Korff, *Geist der Goethezeit: Versuch einer ideellen Entwicklung der klassisch-romantischen Literaturgeschichte*, (Leipzig: Koehler & Amelang, 1927).

[139]In addition to the teleological reason, the shadow of *Ästhetische Erziehung* that hangs over *Anmut und Würde* is also due to the timeliness of its subject matter, with *Anmut und Würde* simply being viewed as participating in a discourse that was no longer fashionable. As such *Anmut und Würde* is thoroughly grounded in an eighteenth century discourse (natura naturata) that was coming to an end. *Ästhetische Erziehung*, however, gestures to a future discourse (natura naturans). Put simply, Schiller's interlocutors for *Anmut und Würde* are the aesthetic tradition of Shaftesbury, Home, Mendelssohn, and Kant, while *Ästhetische Erziehung* anticipates Schelling and Hegel. As a general rule, it is the trendsetters, the creators of a new discourse, that accumulate more attention than those that stake their claim within the parameters of an old one.

[140]Hans Schmeer, *Der Begriff der schönen Seele besonders bei Wieland und in der deutschen Literatur des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin: Ebering, 1922). Robert E. Norton also recognizes the tendency and the necessary pitfalls of viewing Schiller's aesthetics strictly in terms of Kant, to which he proposes considering the two as responses to

between duty and inclination (*Pflicht* and *Neigung*). Kant conceives of duty and inclination in his *Grundlegung einer Metaphysik der Moral* as oppositional forces, since acting from inclination is incompatible with the moral law. Acting from duty, on the other hand, fulfills the moral law. Schiller's response to Kant's formulation is that an adherence to duty does not necessarily bring one into conflict with his inclinations. Adherence to duty can arise from inclination, as exhibited in the figure of the beautiful soul (*die schöne Seele*). As a result of the moral reading there has been a tendency to view the entire text as culminating in the beautiful soul, even when much of the first half of *Anmut und Würde* resists such a reading. The difficulty in interpreting this text partially stems from how one reads Schiller's attempt to bridge the gap between aesthetics and morality, namely whether the use of the term "moral" (*moralisch*, *sittlich*) is consistent or has multiple meanings. By the end of the section on grace, "moral" has a fairly clear meaning of fulfilling one's duty, in that one's actions need to conform to the laws imposed by reason.[141] This is critical for Schiller's notion of the beautiful soul in which there is no contradiction between acting according to moral law and inclination. A correspondence between duty and inclination leads to a similar correspondence between aesthetics and morality, in which the harmony of the beautiful soul expresses itself as grace.

Yet "moral"—especially in the first half of the section on grace—has a more general meaning of freedom of the will.[142] This issue arises from considering the dichotomies between intentional and unintentional movements and between duty and inclination as virtual synonyms.

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historical phenomena. See *The Beautiful Soul: Aesthetic Morality in the Eighteenth Century* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1995), 225-26.

[141]Lesley Sharpe observes a similar issue arising from different definitions of *Sinnlichkeit*, which leads to uncomplimentary notions of moral and a physical beauty. See *Friedrich Schiller: Drama, Thought, Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 137.

[142]Benno von Wiese also interprets Schiller's use of "moralisch" as "die geistige Wesenheit." See von Wiese *Friedrich Schiller* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1963), 468-69.

To be capable of an intentional movement one needs to have a free will, and requires the capacity to act as a cause in a chain of sequences instead of an effect. Adherence to the moral law through duty is made possible by having a free will, but having a free will is not the same as doing ones duty. All actions performed out of duty are *willkürlich*, freely chosen, but as seen in the example of the outstretched arm, which will be discussed later in this chapter, there are other movements that have no relationship to duty but are also capable of being intentional and therefore graceful. The will is defined here not as an adherence to duty, but rather the capacity for "eine ganz frische Reiche von Erscheinungen in sich selbst anzufangen"(NA XX, 261). As a result, there are two notions of grace in Schiller's text: one that manifests in the harmony of duty and inclination, and one that manifests in an intentional movement accompanying a sympathetic movement.

To completely dismiss the moral significance of grace in *Anmut und Würde* would be a grave misreading. However, extrapolating the moral aspect of grace onto sections that explicitly concern bodily movement, sections that are indifferent to morality in the narrow sense, also fails to represent the text. Although a reading that reveals the theatrical significance of *Anmut und Würde* would be a strong departure from the current scholarship, it would bring the treatise in line with much of his other aesthetic work from this period. *Über das Erhabene* and *Über das Pathetische* both examine the relationship between aesthetics and moral freedom while using the theater as a useful site to explore these themes.

Schiller begins his analysis of grace by recounting a myth of the goddess Venus, which illustrates the fundamental characteristics for grace. Venus possesses a belt that has the power to bestow grace upon whomever is endowed with it. Even though the belt belongs to the goddess of beauty, the power of the belt is not identical to beauty. Because the belt can be separated from

the goddess of beauty, Schiller claims that grace is movable beauty, not a permanent quality of an object but one that can emerge incidentally in its subject and just as easily disappear.[143] Schiller differentiates grace from fixed beauty, the kind discussed in the "Kalliasbriefe" that is a necessary quality in the object. Schiller remarks, "Ohne ihren Gürtel ist sie nicht mehr die reizende Venus" however „ohne Schönheit ist sie nicht Venus mehr" (NA XX, 252). Whereas the concept of beauty does not make a claim as to the actual spontaneity of an object, but rather only the appearance, the concept of grace requires that the appearance is harmonious with reality.[144] As a result grace is both objective, in that it isn't merely constituted by a perceiving subject, and also contingent, in that it is not a permanent quality of an object. Finally, since the belt can only be bestowed upon human beings, grace is restricted to entities that possess a free will. While graceful movements require a human subject as their origin, not all movements from beings of free will qualify. Movements that are expressions of nature, automated corporeal movements such as breathing, cannot be graceful. For Schiller only "willkürliche Bewegungen" or intentional movements can exhibit grace because they are an act of a free will and are thus different from animal nature. This human component of grace, a being whose soul allows him to stand above nature, leads Schiller to define grace as "nicht von der Natur gegeben, sondern vom Subjekte selbst hervorgebracht" (NA XX, 255).

Just as not all movements from free beings are graceful, not all intentional movements possess grace. Schiller further differentiates between intentional and sympathetic movements (*sympathetische Bewegungen*). While intentional movements are dependent on an act of will,

[143]"Anmuth ist eine *bewegliche* Schönheit; eine Schönheit nehmlich, die an ihrem Subjekte zufällig entstehen und eben so aufhören kann," (NA XX, 252).

[144]"Es ist der ausdrückliche Sinn des griechischen Mythus, daß sich die Anmuth in eine Eigenschaft der Person verwandle, und daß die Trägerinn des Gürtels liebenswürdig *sey*, nicht bloß *scheine,*" (NA XX, 252).

sympathetic ones emerge out of sentiment from the very act of will.[145] Yet these sympathetic movements are not the same as unintentional movements (*unwillkürlich*), which have their origin completely in nature. Schiller illustrates the correspondence between intentional and sympathetic movements with the example of an outstretched arm. The act of stretching out an arm to grasp an object has a goal intended by a human subject. The manner in which this is accomplished, the variables that the mind defers to the body, are not themselves intended, for instance "wie geschwind oder langsam und mit wie viel oder wenig Kraftaufwand ich die Bewegung verrichten will, in diese genaue Berechnung lasse ich mich in *dem* Augenblick nicht ein, und der Natur in mir wird also hier etwas anheim gestellt" (NA XX, 267). Although sympathetic movements are under the control of a human subject, they are not intended, but one of numerous automated movements that constitute an intentional movement. In effect these are movements that would be intentional, but in the process of simplification their operation has been relinquished to nature. Grace emerges out of a sympathetic movement, which in turn has its origin in an intentional movement.[146]

Even without an explicit reference to actors or the theater (which he does later), Schiller's notion of grace shows much affinity with Lessing's thoughts on acting and corporeal spontaneity. This similarity is made explicit in the following passage from *Anmut und Würde*:

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[145]Schiller further complicates this schema with the inclusion of "feste and ruhende Züge" under the category of grace. Taking issue with Home, Schiller claims that a sleeping person can be graceful if their form maintains traces of their status as "ein wohlwollender sanfter Geist." The unintentional movements of a sleeping person, however, cannot be graceful if they are just mechanical repetitions of their intentional movements. (NA XX, 264-65).

[146]The exact meaning of intentional and sympathetic movements is not beyond dispute. Frederick Beiser, for instance, views Schiller's discussion of the difference between *willkürliche* and *sympathetische Bewegungen* in terms of ethics. *Willkürliche Bewegungen* are not such movements as actions of moral significance, an interpretation that reveals itself in his translation of *Bewegung*, which is indifferent to morality as "action." Schiller does use the word *Tat* or *Handlung*, a more fitting translation of action and deed, to accentuate the ethical dimension of a *Bewegung*, but this comes late in his discussion of grace. In essence Beiser is reading the whole section on grace with its culmination in the beautiful soul in mind, retroactively applying moral terminology onto sections of the text that appear primarily concerned with aesthetics. While this interpretation accentuates the continuity between the two halves of the section on grace, it does so at the expense of the first section. See Beiser's chapter "Grace and Dignity" in *Schiller as Philosopher*, 77-118.

> Es ist bekannt, daß alle bewegende Kräfte im Menschen untereinander zusammenhängen, und so läßt sich einsehen, wie der Geist – auch nur als Prinzip der willkürlichen Bewegung betrachtet – seine Wirkungen durch das ganze System derselben fortpflanzen kann. Nicht bloß die Werkzeuge des Willens, auch diejenigen, über welche der Wille nicht unmittelbar zu gebieten hat, erfahren wenigstens seinen Einfluss. Der Geist bestimmt sie nicht bloß absichtlich, wenn er handelt, sondern auch unabsichtlich, wenn er empfindet. (NA XX, 264)

This passage highlights the striking similarities between Lessing's theory of acting and Schiller's theory of grace. Schiller and Lessing both point to the "Geist" or "Seele" as the source of determination for unintentional movements. These movements likewise contain a crucial aesthetic element, one that accompanies corporeal spontaneity that goes beyond intentionality.[147] Lessing exerts the will through a process of mediation to gain control of gestures that are normally spontaneous, thus to appropriate their status as a spontaneous sign. The will can directly intend neither affective signs nor states, and so it has to exchange direct control for mediated control that relies on the automatic processes between body and soul. At this point in Schiller's treatise there is no mention of affects. Instead he focuses on the movements that accompany an intentional movement, which are not in themselves intended, and their corresponding status as spontaneous. These movements are a part of one's second nature, as opposed to affect, which is a part of the first nature. For Schiller, the necessary element of spontaneity that is needed to achieve grace can be attained by relinquishing control over those movements that are subject to the will. Using a modified form of Schiller's example should make this clearer. The outstretched arm reaching for an apple will produce grace because although the sympathetic movements aren't themselves intentional, they do arise out of the necessities of an intentional movement. The same act on the stage has grace as its intention rather than the apple, and so an act that was formerly classified as incidental becomes intentional. Grace is intentionally unintentional ("bei absichtlichen Bewegungen unabsichtlich") in that it is the result

[147]Schiller also fittingly calls these "begleitende Bewegungen." See NA XX, 268.

of sympathetic movements that accompany intentional ones. The sympathetic movements are never intended but merely arise out of the empty spaces left behind in every intentional movement.

For all their similarities, Lessing and Schiller have two different objectives with their use of spontaneity. Lessing believes that affect cannot be directly intended, so he strives to determine how to indirectly activate the automated aspects of affect in an effort to reproduce its appearance. Schiller is not faced with the problem of intending what is beyond intention because he is only concerned with describing the conditions under which grace occurs rather than its conscious creation. Furthermore, while Schiller is not immediately concerned with practical applications, Lessing is explicitly searching for ways to use affect in the context of the theater. Yet Schiller's examination of intended grace leads to new set of issues that concern its practicality, out of which the theater becomes the prime example and culprit.

If Schiller's theory of grace were so heavily informed by the discourse of corporeal spontaneity, one might expect that the figure of the actor would serve as a prime illustration of grace, as it does in the *Kalliasbriefe*. But Schiller never makes this move, and instead uses actors as a counter-model to grace.[148] Although Schiller views acting as problematic for grace, it is likely that the similarities of his aesthetic writings to acting discourse forced him to contend with corporeal dissimulation, and ultimately also with the subject of acting. Schiller begins to establish the parameters of this problem in an example of a "handelnde Person" expressing himself in front of a large audience. The person's intentional movements have no relation to his inner disposition and thus make it difficult for the audience to discern how he is really feeling. However, if the person were to notice a beloved friend or despised enemy in the audience, "so

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[148]Christopher Wild likewise accentuates the anti-theatrical aspects of grace as the clearest manifestation of Schiller's concept of the *Naiv.* See Wild *Theater der Keuschheit – Keuschheit des Theaters*: *Zur Geschichte der (Anti)-Theatralität von Gryphius bis Kleist* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Rombach, 2003) 375-79.

würde der unzweydeutige Ausdruck seines Gesichts, die Empfindung seines Herzens schnell und bestimmt an den Tag legen," (NA XX, 268) and the audience would then be able to know how he really feels. Although not an explicit example of grace, Schiller demonstrates here how one's disposition is not expressed in an intentional movement, because intentional movements only betray the image the person wants to maintain. Sympathetic or accompanying movements are necessary because they conform to one's disposition. More significantly, this example illustrates how sympathetic movements include not just those movements whose control is relinquished to nature, as in the example of the outstretched arm, but also ones that cannot be intended at all, such as affect. The necessary component of sympathetic movements is not whether one could control the movement or not, but rather if the expression is "mit seiner Ursache im Gemüth durch Naturnothwendigkeit verbunden," (NA XX, 268).

This example leaves open the possibility that someone of skill could appropriate these same sympathetic movements to indicate a particular disposition where none actually exists. Schiller writes:

> Nun mag zwar ein Mensch durch Kunst und Studium es zuletzt wirklich dahin bringen, daß er auch die begleitenden Bewegungen seinem Willen unterwirft und gleich einem geschickten Taschenspieler, welche Gestalt er will, auf den mimischen Spiegel seiner Seele fallen lassen kann. Aber an einem solchen Menschen ist dann auch alles Lüge, und alle Natur wird von der Kunst verschlungen. Grazie hingegen muß jederzeit Natur, d. i. unwillkürlich sein (wenigsten so scheinen), und das Subjekt selbst darf nie so aussehen, als wenn es um seine Anmuth *wüßte*. (NA XX, 269)

This passage represents a critical development in Schiller's concept of grace, but it comes into conflict with his original definition. Up until now grace has been an objective aesthetic quality, a point Schiller makes with the example of Venus. The belt of Venus does not just bestow the appearance of grace where there was none before, but rather grace becomes a constitutive part of the wearer's character. Schiller admits that the belt is not the best image to convey a change in

personal character, but stands by it, claiming that the belt does not just create the appearance of grace. Yet in this instance Schiller opens a space, albeit in a dismissive manner, for the mere subjective perception of grace that does not correspond to Schiller's previous definition. Grace must at least *appear* ("wenigstens so scheinen") uncontrived, implying that the sympathetic movements necessary for grace can be intended as long as they do not seem like they are. As such, the subjective perception as a component of grace appears to be a vestige of "Freiheit in der Erscheinung" from the "Kalliasbriefe." The use of the word *scheinen* is not incidental, since Schiller states it again in another context.[149]

Allowing for the possibility of grace in appearance opens up a space for it to be employed in the theater, a fact that Schiller must contend with. An illusionist (*Taschenspieler*) can create the appearance of sympathetic movements that accompany intentional movements and produce a manifestation of grace that lacks a truly unintentional component. The task of the illusionist is to feign the appearance of it being unintentional. Schiller refers to this as imitated or learned grace (*nachgeahmte* or *gelernte Anmut*), which also bears the names theatrical grace and *Tanzmeistergrazie.* Actors and dancers employ this in the same manner as the *Taschenspieler*, who attempts to produce the appearance of grace without relying on true sympathetic movements. Schiller admits that some actors are quite good at deceiving the audience into believing they are actually graceful. Ultimately he considers their performance a lie, and they receive none of the same praise he lavishes on actors who were also feigning an appearance in "Über das gegenwärtige teutsche Theater" and "Kalliasbriefe".

Schiller's double standard cannot be immediately accounted for. It becomes all the more apparent (and problematic) when he makes more explicit comparisons of theatrical grace to the

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[149]"Ob aber gleich die Anmuth etwas unwillkührliches seyn oder scheinen muß, so suchen wir sie doch nur bey Bewegungen, die mehr oder weniger von dem Willen abhängen," (NA XX 270-71).

illusion aesthetic found in the theater. “Sobald wir merken, daß die *Anmuth* erkünstelt ist,” Schiller remarks, “so schließt sich plötzlich unser Herz, und zurücke flieht die ihr entgegenwallende Seele. Aus Geist sehen wir plötzlich Materie geworden, und ein Wolkenbild aus einer himmlischen Juno,” (NA XX, 270). Similar rhetoric can also be found in the “Kalliasbriefe” in regard to affect and beauty, which Schiller claimed were not only compatible with acting, but also essentially a requirement of good acting. Now Schiller appears overly concerned with the failure of the theatrical illusion. If the illusion fails to erase its own contrived nature appropriately, if it appears intended, then the desired effects on the audience never materialize. Imitated grace thus represents a constant threat to a performance, since it takes only the slightest mistake for the intentionality behind grace to shine through and produce distain and disgust in the audience.

It is important to note that Schiller doesn’t categorically condemn grace in performers and admits that it has a role on the stage when it occurs unintentionally. Dancers for instance can allow true grace to manifest by relinquishing bodily control over to mass and gravity.[150] Those that practice imitated grace, and Schiller singles out actors in this regard, bear the brunt of his distain. Schiller then goes into the two principal and often contradictory demands placed upon actors: that their portrayal is both true and beautiful. The truth of the portrayal, on the one hand, requires the actor’s *Kunst*; otherwise the actor wouldn’t be an artist at all. The grace of the portrayal, on the other hand, requires that the performance contain no dissimulation. Schiller realizes that two contradictory demands are placed on actors. He provides the following response to a fictional actor who asks how to produce grace on the stage: “Er soll, ist meine Meinung,

[150]“Der Tanzmeister kommt der wahren Anmuth unstreitig zu Hülfe, indem er dem Willen die Herrschaft über seine Werkzeuge verschafft und die Hindernisse hinwegräumt, welche die *Masse* und *Schwerkraft* dem Spiel der lebendigen Kräfte entgegensetzen,” (NA XX, 269). In Weimar the question of whether one was a stage actor, singer in a *Nachspiel*, or a dancer, defied strict categorization, since many performers were all these things at once.

zuerst dafür sorgen, daß die Menschheit in ihm selbst zur Zeitigung komme, dann soll er hingehen und (wenn es sonst sein Beruf ist) sie auf der Schaubühne repräsentiren" (NA XX, 270). Schiller reaffirms his rejection of theatrical grace and asserts that only actors who cultivate and actualize their full humanity off the stage can exhibit grace on the stage. Effectively this advice constitutes telling the actor not to act. His rhetoric found in the "Kalliasbriefe" has virtually disappeared, and instead he suggests that an actor should subjugate his person to the role because grace can only truly emerge on the stage in a virtuous person.

At this point Schiller conceives of grace in two contradictory ways. He rejects theatrical grace on the condition that it lacks true sympathetic movements, and yet he concedes that grace as a mere appearance is at least possible.[151] The apparent contradiction can be partially resolved by pointing out Schiller's two concerns for grace. Grace is indeed capable of being feigned, at least momentarily, and the objective component of grace derived from Venus' belt that Schiller claimed at the beginning of his treatise is merely incorrect. At the same time, Schiller is concerned about whether the appearance of grace can be maintained over the course of the performance. While Schiller must admit that grace can be feigned, due to practical considerations this should be avoided, since a single blunder can mar an entire performance. From Schiller's reasoning here it would appear that imitated or theatrical grace is problematic because it is too difficult to master and therefore unreliable for the stage. At the same time, recognizing that an actor might err and spoil the performance is hardly a sufficient reason to categorically dismiss the practice all together, since he so willingly embraced the same issue in

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[151]David Pugh notes a "troubling ambivalence" here by acknowledging and condemning theatrical grace. Conceding the possibility of theatrical grace, Schiller is effectively undermining much of his project for his concept of grace. He finds a partial solution in the manner in which grace can become second nature through *Kunst*, which he takes as his explanation for Schiller's advice to the fictional actor. This move, however, does not deal with Schiller's invective against theatrical grace. See Pugh *Dialectic of Love: Platonism in Schiller's Aesthetics* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997) 266-9.

his essay "Über das gegenwärtige teutsche Theater." Even in the "Kalliasbriefe" the question of whether an actor could maintain the illusion was a crucial point for his division between the ideal and the poor actor.

Resolving the discrepancy between Schiller's treatments of grace and theatrical affective expressions requires turning to the kinds of arguments he makes against actors. Immediately apparent is his harsh anti-theatrical rhetoric, the kind the theater has been familiar with since its earliest days, when the Greek statesman Solon asked the dramatist Thespis if he felt ashamed to deceive so many people.[152] Schiller declares the attempt to feign grace "ist dann auch alles Lüge," that actors can "den Kenner betrügen," and are a kind of lowly illusionists (*Taschenspieler*), the same language used in *Der Geisterseher* to describe the Sicilian. His word choice, *betrügen*, is striking.[153] On the one hand the term *täuschen* is typical of the theater discourse of the natural acting paradigm. *Täuschen* is used positively to describe actors who successfully portrayed their role on the stage, producing the desired affective response in the audience. *Betrügen*, on the other hand, is unambiguously immoral. Referring to actors as *Betrüger* is quite surprising, since this rhetoric more closely resembles that of theater opponents such as Rousseau rather than a dramatist often known as the German Shakespeare. Schiller is forced to characterize the theatrical grace of actors as *betrügen* because of the moral threat they

[152]Plutarch *Greek Lives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 74.

[153]Women are singled out as the prime culprits of theatrical grace. "Das andre Geschlecht, welches vorzugsweise im Besitze der wahren Anmuth ist, macht sich auch der falschen am meistens schuldig; aber nirgends beleidigt diese mehr, als wo sie der Begierde zum Angel dienet. Aus dem Lächeln der wahren Grazie wird dann die widrigste Grimasse, das schöne Spiel der Augen, so bezaubernd, wenn wahre Empfindung daraus spricht, wird zur Verdrehung, die schmelzend modulirende Stimme, so unwiderstehlich in einem wahren Munde, wird zu einem studirten tremulirenden Klang, und die ganze Musik weiblicher Reizung zu einer betrüglichen Toilettenkunst," (NA XX, 307).

represent for grace.[154] If actors are deceivers and grace is a moral concept, then actors are problematic representatives of grace. Although the text depicts two different notions of grace, one explicitly moral and the other not, Schiller does not acknowledge this contradiction. Perhaps the only real ghost of *Der Geisterseher* is its legacy that haunts *Anmut und Würde*, in which Schiller represses the Rousseauian nightmare in order to preserve the moral integrity of his concept of grace. In addition, the marginal position actors held in the eighteenth century further accentuates this moral threat. Although actors had come a long way since Karoline Neuber was denied a Christian burial on account of her being an actress, even by the 1790s it would still have been unacceptable to propose that an actor could represent the paragon of moral achievement.

Yet Schiller's appropriation of anti-theatrical arguments does not explain why he gives the moral threat credence in the first place. Although affects and grace can produce a desired reaction in the audience, in the context of the theater no one is truly deceived in the same way as the Count from *Der Geisterseher,* who believed that the Sicilian's affective expressions were real. The setting of the theater creates a set of expectations that inhibit the possibility of true deception. The moral threat of actors in *Anmut und Würde* is rather Schiller's attempt to deal with the larger systemic threat they represent. Schiller represses theatrical grace because it undermines the fundamental characteristic of grace: harmony. As was demonstrated in the example of the sleepwalker, actors are characterized by the ability to decouple affective expression from affective state, or more generally a complete severance between exterior appearance and interior reality. Actors interfere with Schiller's theory of grace because they can

[154]Gabriele Brandstetter adumbrates this incompatibility between a moral aesthetic and feigned grace as an explanation for the invective rhetoric in *Anmut und Würde*. Brandstetter omits, however, the moments that Schiller provides a space for theatrical grace—that grace in the appearance is possible—only by drawing attention to the sections where Schiller claims its objective and not its subjective status. See Brandstetter "Die Bilderschrift der Empfindungen. Jean-Georges Noverres *Lettres sur la Danse, et sur les Ballets* und Friedrich Schillers Abhandlung *Über Anmut und Würde*" in *Schiller und die höfische Welt* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1990), 87-88.

only function as a counter-model to the *schöne Seele*: whereas unity distinguishes the beautiful soul, disunity marks the figure of the actor. By admitting that grace can be feigned, actors not only undermine its harmony of interior and exterior but also its objective status: it requires the *perception* of grace as its constitutive element. In the same way that the figure of the actor the in *Der Geisterseher* undermines for the Prince the knowledge of human affective states, actors present Schiller with an epistemological problem. If aesthetic phenomena are not reliable indicators of moral virtue, then the attempt of Schiller's project to suture the sensual and moral realms founders. As versatile as the model of the actor is, the *schöne Seele* is the one role an actor can never perform.

As this chapter has demonstrated, Schiller integrates his work as a dramaturge into his aesthetics in *Anmut und Würde*, drawing on his experience as a poet to answer philosophical questions. Yet by relying on the discourse of corporeal spontaneity, he inadvertently retains from that discourse the figure of the actor, who seeks to portray only the appearance of spontaneity. Since what actors can do with their bodies undermines the very integrity of his philosophical endeavor, Schiller the philosopher effectively supersedes Schiller the dramaturge. This requires the actor's exclusion, and forces Schiller to appropriate the arguments of anti-Theater.

Chapter Three

Expunging the Spontaneous: Goethe's Weimar Theater and Regimenting Actors' Bodies

> "Wer Schauspieler bilden will, muß
> unendliche Geduld haben."
> – Gespräche mit Eckermann[155]

On March 14, 1807 the Weimar Theater featured Austrian composer Carl Ditters von Dittersdorf's opera *Das Rote Käppchen*. On that evening the most remarkable feature of this largely forgotten work did not derive from the quality of the musical performance, but rather from certain liberties two actors had taken with the script. Karl Wolfgang Unzelmann und Carl Ignaz Dirzka decided to deviate from the rehearsed plan and improvise a dialogue. Georg Witkowski recounts the incident as follows

> Der Schauspieler Unzelmann hat in seiner Rolle zu erzählen, er habe in Stuttgart, Amsterdam, und Schwäbisch Hall gespielt. Darauf fragte ihn extemporierend sein Kollege Dirzka, ob er nicht auch in Lauchstädt (der Filialebühne der Weimarer) gewesen sei, und als Unzelmann darauf mit Ja antwortete, erwiderte Dirzka, dort sei er gewiss ausgepfiffen worden. In einem nicht mehr feststellbaren Zusammenhang damit hatte Unzelmann ferner gesagt, er heiße Ischariot Levi Lehmann.[156]

Although much of the audience was likely not in on the joke, the intended target of their ridicule, Carl Reinhold, unmistakably recognized their scathing reference. An actor in Goethe's troupe, Reinhold was born Zacharias Lehmann, a Jew who converted to Christianity at the age of 22. Reinhold and his wife had joined the Weimar Theater the previous year, and Reinhold made his debut in Lauchstädt. The origins of the conflict between Reinhold and Unzelmann, whether

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[155]Johann Wolfgang Goethe, *Sämtliche Werke nach Epochen seines Schaffens*, Münchener Ausgabe, Band 19, (München: Carl Hanser, 1988), 111.

[156]Georg Witkowski "Extemporieren der Schauspieler: Neue Urkunden zur Goethes Theaterleitung" in *Jahrbuch der Sammlung Kippenberg* (1931) 270.

stemming from a personal vendetta or anti-Semitic prejudices, are unknown, but the consequences of the act of theatrical improvisation remain extant. Reinhold took great offense, and on the following day found revenge by slapping Unzelmann repeatedly. Such violations to the decorum and the artistic integrity of Goethe's theater in Weimar did not go unpunished. Reinhold was placed under arrest for approximately sixty hours and the incident possibly expedited his dismissal from the theater later that year.[157] Although Reinhold was the main belligerent, Unzelmann and Dirzka were also subject to Goethe's punitive measures. Surprisingly, their offense had nothing to do with their instigation of the incident or with their attack on Reinhold. Instead, the two actors were found guilty of extemporizing during a performance, and were forced to pay a fine.

While the offenses of improvisation and assault appear divorced from one another, a fundamental similarity binds them: an unpredictable departure from established norms that threatens to undermine the theatrical work of art. Unzelmann and Dirzka's violation of the script is at odds with regulative measures to ensure that actors' behavior on the stage conforms to the particular expectations of the artistic direction. Reinhold's sudden attack against Unzelmann off the stage is similarly problematic, namely because it compromises the social cohesion required of successful acting troupes. Furthermore, it should be noted that it was a lack of a cordial relationship among the actors that led to the extemporizing incident in the first place. More critically, Reinhold violates the codes of behavior that regulate how an actor represents himself in public. On the one hand this constitutes a setback in the "Erziehung" of actors and plays into the traditional image of the unruly actor who through his lack of sophistication and bodily

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[157]It remains unclear whether the incident took place before or after Goethe decided not to renew their contracts for an additional season. In any case, the decision was likely long coming, since Reinhold often reportedly quarreled with other actors, and his lack-luster performances disappointed Goethe. See Dieter Borchmeyer "Saat von Göthe gesäet… Die 'Regeln für Schauspieler' – Ein Theatergeschichtliches Gerücht" in *Schauspielkunst im 18. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1992) 263-267.

control fails to reign in his frenzied passions. Yet the violation of public norms is not Goethe's only concern. As we will discover in the course of this chapter, Goethe largely abolishes the distinction between the personal and professional lives of actors, thereby making Reinhold's unpredictable behavior in public a threat to his meticulously constructed theatrical order.

In this chapter I argue that instead of harnessing the spontaneity of the body as in Lessing and the early Schiller, Goethe's theatrical aesthetic is best understood as attempting to diminish the inimical effects that actors and their bodies impose on a performance. While this extends into multiple realms, the greatest impediment to Goethe's theatrical project is the spontaneity of the actor's body, those aspects that obstruct the creation of the autonomous work of art. Although Goethe's aesthetic departs from creating mimetically perfect affects, the issue of spontaneity and actor autonomy remains a substantial obstacle to his theatrical aesthetic and informs many of his prescriptions. As a result, rather than striving to produce the appearance of spontaneity, one of the chief governing principles for Goethe is rather the containment of spontaneity: through their autonomy actors' bodies constitute a medium that resists utilization in dramatic performances. Goethe minimizes the pitfalls of using living human bodies on the stage by erecting forms of corporeal discipline that aim to both regulate it internally as well as control it externally through physical obstructions.

This chapter proceeds by outlining Goethe's conception of the theater during his tenure as theater director in Weimar. Goethe's theatrical aesthetic derives from a notion of the ideal aesthetic relationship between *Kunst* and *Natur*, in which the medium that constitutes the work of art is forced to conceal its origins in reality. By denying the person of the actor in favor of the character the actor is portraying, Goethe's theatrical aesthetic runs into some trouble with the autonomy of the body. By instituting corporeal regimes, which he demonstrates in his *Regeln für*

Schauspieler, or by concealing the actor's body through the reintroduction of masks to the stage, Goethe is able to mitigate the affects of the spontaneous and remove the traces of the real that would undermine the totality of his work of art.[158] The issues emerging from Goethe's manipulation of the actor's body so that it fits into his theatrical mold are witnessed in the tableau vivant scenes in *Die Wahlverwandtschaften*. By depicting an artistic genre (tableaux vivants) that requires actors to push their bodily control to its limit, *Die Wahlverwandschaften* amplifies the struggle in Goethe's Weimar Theater between fantasies of complete directorial control and actor autonomy.

Secondary Literature

Eckehard Catholy begins a 1974 essay with an apparent lament on how over-researched Goethe's time as theater director in Weimar has become.[159] Indeed, both before and since Catholy's essay Goethe's Weimar as been the subject of countless monographs and articles, leaving both Catholy and the twenty-first-century scholar to wonder if the topic has in fact been thoroughly exhausted. Yet, as Catholy admits, much of the research (at least when he was writing) is in agreement and often repeats the traditional chronological narrative account that seeks to explain Goethe according to the "praktischen und theoretischen Bemühungen Goethes um die Bühne als Auswirkungen seiner pädagogischen Natur und seines Kampfes für 'das

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[158]Such language naturally calls to mind Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*. Similar to Foucault's claims that disciplinary measures in the penal system and other societal institutions were designed to create submissive subjects, Goethe requires docile acting bodies for his aesthetic endeavor. Furthermore, Foucault's cynical rejection of the idea that eighteenth century prison reforms are part of a humanitarian project mirror my own skepticism that Goethe's rules for acting were intended to better the social standing of actors. Klaus Schwind also observes some of these parallels. See Schwind, "'No Laughing!' Autonomous Art and the Body of the Actor in Goethe's Weimar" in *Theater Survey* Vol. 38 Num. 2 (Nov. 1997), 106.

[159]See Eckehard Catholy, "Bühnenraum und Schauspielkunst. Goethes Theaterkonzeption" in *Bühnenformen, Bühnenräume, Bühnendekorationen: Beiträge zur Entwicklung des Spielorts* (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 1974), 136.

Ideale.'"[160] Characteristic of these approaches are Julius Wahle's *Das Weimarer Theater*, Willi Flemming's *Goethes Gestaltung des klassischen Theaters* and *Goethe und das Theater seiner Zeit,* and Marvin Carson's *Goethe and the Weimar Theatre.*[161] These accounts are incredibly useful for orienting oneself to the vastness of the Weimar Theater and there is certainly much truth in the claim that Goethe's search for "the ideal" determined his staging practices. My contribution here is to reveal how Goethe's theatrical ideal is also interested in mitigating a pervasive fear of the spontaneity of the actor's body.

More recently scholars have departed from comprehensive accounts and have devoted more focus to specific thematic aspects of the Weimar Theater. Birgit Himmelseher in her *Das Weimarer Hoftheater unter Goethes Leitung. Kunstanspruch und Kulturpoetik im Konflikt* explores how the Weimar Theater was situated in a greater European political context that experienced the explosive upheavals of the French Revolution, the hegemony of Napoleonic France, and the reshaping of the European geopolitical order after the Congress of Vienna.[162] Birgit Wiens' *"Grammatik" der Schauspielkunst: die Inszenierung der Geschlechter in Goethes klassischem Theater* explores Goethe's theater through the lens of gender studies and in so doing calls attention to the role that the bodies of actors played in gender formation; this naturally intersects with my own research on the actor's body.[163] Wiens' approach permits her to examine texts from Goethe that are less frequently the focus of scholarly research, such as "Frauenrollen, auf dem Römischen Theater durch Männer gespielt," and she provides one of the few

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[160]Catholy, "Bühnenraum und Schauspielkunst," 136.

[161]Julius Wahle, *Das Weimarer Theater* (Weimar: Verlag der Goethe-Gesellschaft, 1892).

[162]See Birgit Himmelseher, *Das Weimarer Hoftheater unter Goethes Leitung. Kunstanspruch und Kulturpoetik im Konflikt* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010). Himmelseher begins with a similar lament of the supersaturated field of research: "Ein weiteres Buch zu Goethe – was gibt es da noch Neues zu entdecken?"

[163]See Birgit Wiens, *"Grammatik" der Schauspielkunst: die Inszenierung der Geschlechter in Goethes klassischem Theater* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2000).

discussions on Goethe's use of masks in the Weimar Theater. Our research diverges in that my primary interest highlights the universal and thus non-gender specific aspects of the body that give difficulties to artistic direction. As shall become evident, a text such as "Regeln für Schauspieler" only occasionally differentiates according to gender, with the vast majority of his prescriptions for actors applying to both sexes.[164]

An integral interlocutor for my position is Klaus Schwind. In his essay "'No Laughing!' Autonomous Art and the Body of the Actor in Goethe's Weimar" Schwind details the disciplinary measures taken against actors who deviated from Goethe's artistic vision while also exploring the problematic status of the aesthetic of comic actors in Weimar. The comic actor, whose tendency is to extemporize, necessarily clashes with a system that is built around predictability and congruency with the theatrical artwork as a whole. Schwind's writes

> Clearly, the comic actors, in their spontaneity, had one thing in common: as acting bodies they disturbed this isolated and self-contained world of (ostensibly) autonomous art. Ultimately, Goethe's world of high art could be autonomous only though isolation and containment. Only then could it represent a universal world of abstract ideals.[165]

Schwind lays out here much of what is stake in my argument: the inherent antagonism between actors and Goethe's system, one which is perhaps best illustrated by the example of Unzelmann's ridicule of Reinhold.[166] Comedic actors provide a site of resistance against the self-

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[164]The notable exception to this are the gender specific traces of the person that Goethe addresses in "Regeln für Schauspieler," such as women being required to leave their purses off the stage. It would be a productive endeavor, albeit one outside the purview of this dissertation, to investigate the extent to which contrasting notions of male and female acting bodies gave rise to variant gender specific notions of corporeal spontaneity.

[165]Klaus Schwind, "'No Laughing!,' 100.

[166]Goethe concedes in a draft of a letter to Christian Gottlob from March 17, 1807 that while improvisation is suitable for comedy, it is deeply problematic for more "regular" theatrical endeavors such as tragedy. "Daß das geschriebene Exemplar eines Stücks nur ein todter Buchstabe sey, welchen der Schauspieler mit Lust und Liebe bei der Aufführung beleben soll, weiß ich recht wohl. Deshalb habe ich auch nicht ungern gesehen, wenn man mehr oder weniger mit guter Laune, besonders den Possenspielen nachhalf und hier und da etwas einfügte – Indessen ist das Extemporiren bei allen regelmäßigen Theatern höchst verboten und verpönt, weil freylich nicht von Jedem Schauspieler und auch von dem Gewandtesten nicht jederzeit die Gränze empfunden wird, wie weit man auf diesem Wege gehen könne. See Borchmeyer, "Saat von Göthe gesäet," 265-66 for further discussion of this passage.

contained work of art, a moment in which the autonomy as dictated by the medium of the genre –actors improvising– infringes on the autonomy of the work of art. Yet this conflict does not limit itself to comedy and improvisation. Whereas Schwind is primarily concerned with the comedic genre as expressed by actors, the autonomy of the actor's body so far explored in my investigation presents a more general threat that transcends genre and also pervades Goethe's disciplinary measures.

Weimar Theater and "Über Wahrheit und Wahrscheinlichkeit der Kunstwerke"

Goethe's theatrical experience easily dwarfs that of Lessing and Schiller. As the dramaturge at the Hamburg National Theater, a position he held for less than two years, Lessing's role was largely restricted to observation and assessment. Schiller's time in Mannheim was also only held for a brief period and consisted of becoming acquainted with the art of acting through his position as the chief playwright and his association with actors.[167] Goethe's role at the Weimar Theater was anything but a brief stint and spanned decades. His time there afforded him practical experience both as a director of instructing actors on their art and as an indendant or administrator of the Weimar Theater. After the fire of 1774, which destroyed the theater and caused the esteemed Abel Seyler troupe to relocate to Gotha, Weimar was left without the professional actors normally expected of a ducal theater. Instead, from 1775 to 1784, the theater of Weimar consisted of a *Liebhabergesellschaft*, a kind amateur theater troupe comprised of members of the court, including Duke Karl August, his mother and notable patron of the arts the Duchess Anna Amalia, and Goethe. While this theater debuted some of Goethe's plays such as *Iphigenia auf Tauris* (with Goethe in the role of Orestes), it lacked the consistent assiduousness

[167]This is not to exclude Schiller's work with Goethe in the Weimar Theater in the years shortly before his death.

as well as the professional acting talent expected of a national theater.[168] Despite this, Goethe's theatrical experience during this period was to prove formative, providing him much practical experience in the theater.[169] His time with the *Liebhabergesellschaft* also gave Goethe the chance in 1778 to perform with perhaps the most renowned actor in Germany, Conrad Ekhof, during a visit to neighboring Gotha. Goethe left the world of theater and acting in the second half of the 1780's, only to return at the behest of Duke Karl August in 1791 in which he took over the direction of the Weimar Theater after the departure of its previous intendant Joseph Bellomo.[170] It is here that Goethe's career as theater director and administrator begins in earnest.

In the years following Goethe's appointment, the Weimar Theater pioneered some significant artistic innovations. Writing retrospectively in 1802, Goethe composed a brief account of the theater he published in the *Journal des Luxus und der Moden* called "Weimarisches Theater," in which he divided its history into four periods. Not surprisingly, this division largely excludes the *Liebhabergesellschaft* and Bellomo's tenure, and begins with his appointment as director in 1791 till the guest appearance of Iffland in 1796.[171] The following period runs until the renovation of the main theater hall (1798), the third period ends with the staging of the Roman dramatist Terence's *Brothers* (1801), and the fourth extends to the present in which he is writing. The markers in Goethe's periodization are quite telling in that the three

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[168]Goethe admits as much in a letter from January 19, 1783 to Charlotte von Stein in which he refers to his position at the *Liebhabergesellschaft* as the "Großmeister der Affen." See Wahle, *Das Weimarer Theater*, 14-15.

[169]Wahle, *Das Weimarer Theater*, 15.

[170] Bellomo's tenure in Weimar is largely recognized as a period of decline in the quality of the theater. Fortunately for Duke Karl August, who was unable to dismiss him before his contract was up in 1792, Bellomo took another position and enabled the Duke to replace him with Goethe. See Marvin Carlson *Goethe and the Weimar Theatre* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978), 56-57.

[171]Dieter Borchmeyer proposes that the acting style in these early years at the Weimar Theater undoubtedly adhered to the traditional naturalistic method. It was only after Iffland's visits in 1796 and 1798 that the anti-naturalistic style more often associated with Weimar develops. See Borchmeyer, *Weimarer Klassik. Porträt einer Epoche* (Weinheim: Beltz Athenäum, 1994), 378.

moments, Iffland's appearance, the renovation, and the performance of Terence, must have been viewed with such consequence and innovation that they warranted punctuating this history of the theater. These moments are at the same time developments of the art of acting and reveal the aesthetic standard of the Weimar Theater. It is to these first moments to that I will now turn, reserving the performance of Terence for later in the chapter.

According to Goethe, Iffland's guest performance in Weimar revolutionized how he conceptualized the art of acting. After Iffland, Goethe views the natural acting paradigm, which had dominated the stage in Germany for the past half-century, as possessing a false understanding of *Natürlichkeit*. Iffland's performance "löst endlich das Rätsel" of the relation of the actor to his role and served as a model for subsequent actors in Weimar. Goethe derives a single principle of the art of the actor that establishes what exactly Iffland got right: "Der Schauspieler müsse seine Persönlichkeit verleugnen und dergestalt umbilden lernen, dass es von ihm abhange, in gewissen Rollen seine Individualität unkenntlich zu machen."[172] At first glance, this principle does not appear as revolutionary as Goethe might have meant it here, since as was demonstrated in the previous chapter, the notion that the best actor conceals his individuality in favor of his character is found in Schiller's *Kalliasbriefe*. Goethe's point here is likely that Iffland was able to manifest in praxis often-elusive theoretical principles. Yet this is not merely a theoretical issue that often fails to be practically implemented on the stage. Goethe makes clear that "ein falsch verstandner Konversationston, so wie ein unrichtiger Begriff von Natürlichkeit" had previously permeated the theater discourse.[173]

Goethe's second moment in the history of the Weimar Theater, the renovation of the main theater hall in 1798, appears at first to offer little in terms of innovations in the art of

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[172]Goethe, *Sämtliche Werke,* Band 6.2, 694.

[173]Ibid., 694.

acting. The renovation was taken as an opportunity for the premier of Schiller's *Wallensteins Lager*, a drama that in Goethe's eyes returned the neglected declamatory style to German stages. Declamation, long associated with the neo-classical French theater, had become effectively taboo, as was demonstrated with Mendelssohn and Nicolai's criticism of *Miss Sara Sampson*, a charge that Lessing took very seriously. Goethe appears primarily interested in "rhythmische Deklamation" or the return of verse to the theater. In the latter half of the eighteenth century, verse dramas appeared only sporadically, with the notable exceptions of *Nathan der Weise* and *Don Carlos*. This development was compounded by the fact that the last few generations of actors had no longer received any training in verse, a vicious cycle that meant fewer authors would write in a form that scarcely had the chance to be performed. Goethe sought with some difficultly to break this cycle by reintroducing verse dramas into the German repertoire, relying on Schiller's talent as a poet and re-translating Voltaire's dramas *Mahomet* and *Tancred* into German. The very reason that led to the decline of the impassioned rhetoric of declamation and verse over the previous decades, that it was out of sync with the *Natürlichkeit* that elevated the role of the body, appears to be why Goethe seeks to return it to the theater. Verse, just as Schiller's chorus from *Die Braut von Messina*, transgresses *Natürlichkeit* by seeking to erect a new aesthetic standard through its own volition.

By the time he wrote the *Weimarisches Theater*, Goethe considered retrospectively its greatest achievements to be the rejection of *Natürlichkeit* and the elevation of a play's artfulness through both Iffland's acting philosophy and the reintroduction of declamation. Scholars have often observed another moment in the history of Goethe's tenure at Weimar as fundamental for the formation of its aesthetic views, one that Goethe doesn't place in his narrative: Wilhelm von Humboldt's essay "Über die gegenwärtige französische tragische Bühne." The essay appeared

originally as a letter from Humboldt to Goethe on August 18, 1799. Humboldt had been living in Paris since 1797, which afforded him extensive experience with the French Theater, namely viewing performances by François-Joseph Talma, the most renowned French actor of his day. The performances Humboldt witnessed were an immediate contrast to the conventions typical in German theaters, and he writes that actors performed with more regard to the *Kunst* of a performance and adhered less to naturalism. Humboldt is quick to point out that while this acting style appears to violate *Natürlichkeit*, like all nations the French merely have a different notion of nature, which is bound with the "Einfachen, Leichten, durchaus Gehaltnen."[174] By accounting more for the artistic elements of a performance, French actors use a more declamatory style, performing more for the audience than for themselves (a charge he levels at German actors), and employing verse instead of prose.[175] Despite its stilted characteristics, the French theater thoroughly impressed Humboldt.

Goethe responded to Humboldt on October 28, 1799 that his commentary on the French theater had made a strong impression on both him and Schiller, and offered to have the letter published in his journal *Propyläen*. In addition Goethe remarks that Humboldt's letter had cleared up misconceptions of about the French theater, making his work on Voltaire's *Mahomet* possible. Goethe's acknowledgment of the influence of Humboldt's letter on his dramaturgy has led many scholars to view it as the impetus for the shift in theatrical aesthetics in Weimar.[176]

Although the French theater shares many of the stylistic features with Goethe's Weimar Theater such as versification, declamation, and a general departure from a naturalistic aesthetic,

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[174]*Texte zur Theorie des Theaters,* 187.

[175]Ibid, 188.

[176]See Julius Wahle, *Das Weimarer Theater*, 163, and Walter Hinck, *Goethe–Mann des Theaters* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1982), 274.

the core of these notions were already present in Goethe's writings.[177] The significance of Humboldt on Goethe is likely not what initiated the aesthetic shift in Weimar, since we will see that many of its underlying principles predate the letter. The letter rather attests to an existing theater outside of the dominant paradigm in Germany, one that has a proven track record that Goethe can use to justify his aesthetic choices.

Until now I have briefly explored some of the various manifestations of the theatrical aesthetic of Weimar Classicism, such as versification, and have emphasized Goethe's rejection of *Natürlichkeit*. To better conceptualize the basis of this rejection, which will determine his prescriptions for actors attended to later in this chapter, we'll have to move beyond his "Weimarisches Theater," a text which insufficiently explains his reasoning, to an essay Goethe wrote in 1797 and published in the *Propyläen* the following year: "Über Wahrheit und Wahrscheinlichkeit der Kunstwerke." This dialogue outlines many of the fundamental assumptions that distinguish Goethe's aesthetics in Weimar Classicism, namely an understanding of the relationship between nature and art that builds on the concept of aesthetic autonomy.

"Über Wahrheit und Wahrscheinlichkeit der Kunstwerke" consists of an exchange between an audience spectator (*Zuschauer*) and an artist's advocate (*Anwalt des Künstlers*) who enter into a debate on the aesthetics that govern theatrical performances. The two begin by discussing whether including painted depictions of the audience along the walls of the loges is appropriate for the theater. The *Zuschauer* argues against such depictions on the basis that they violate the principle of verisimilitude. Yet while the *Zuschauer* claims that the theater should at least strive for the appearance of "wahr und wirklich," the *Anwalt,* undoubtedly a mouthpiece for

[177]To some extent the alleged impact Humboldt's letter has on Goethe is baffling. Talma was known primarily for returning to naturalist conventions on the stage, many of which, such as actors turning backs to the audience, Goethe rejects as a misunderstood sense of naturalism in rule 39 of the "Regeln für Schauspieler." As I will explore briefly, Goethe's repudiation of natural acting is not a development that comes after Humboldt's letter, but rather a view he held before it.

Goethe's opinions, rejects the theater's pretension to slavishly represent reality. Although Goethe is clearly privileging the opinion of the *Anwalt*, the *Zuschauer* is no buffoon and continually makes valid observations and objections, albeit ones that the *Anwalt* always successfully integrates into his aesthetic world view.

The implications of their conversation quickly move beyond the depictions of the audience and address more fundamental questions concerning the relationship of the theater to reality, including the issue of acting. When the *Anwalt* challenges that no one demands that the stage "wahr und wirklich scheinen solle," the *Zuschauer* retorts that empirically the opposite seems to be true.

> Wenn ich es nicht verlangte, warum gäbe sich den der Dekorateur die Mühe, alle Linien aufs genaueste nach den Regeln der Perspektive zu ziehen, alle Gegenstände nach der vollkommensten Haltung zu malen? Warum studierte man aufs Kostüm? Warum ließe man sich es soviel kosten, ihm treu zu bleiben, um dadurch mich in jene Zeiten zu versetzten? Warum rühmt man den Schauspieler am meistens der die Empfindungen am wahrsten ausdrückt, der in Rede, Stellung und Gebärden der Wahrheit am nächsten kommt, der mich täuscht, daß ich nicht eine Nachahmung, sondern die Sache selbst zu sehen glaube?[178]

The *Zuschauer*'s response lays bare many of the assumptions of the natural acting paradigm. If so much effort is placed into the details that appear to correspond to reality, then how can the *Anwalt* propose that the principle of adhering to reality does not determine the aesthetics of the performance? Not being unsettled by the *Zuschauer*'s observation, the *Anwalt* devises a clever yet somewhat cryptic response: "Sie drücken Ihre Empfindungen recht gut aus, nur ist es schwerer als Sie vielleicht denken, recht deutlich einzusehen, was man empfindet."[179] The *Anwalt* switches the object of discussion from actors to the *Zuschauer* himself, who has become heated in the discussion, as shown by his use of an exclamation mark. Only the affective

[178]Goethe, *Sämtliche Werke*, Band 4.2, 90.

[179]Ibid., 90.

expressions of the *Zuschauer* are available as signs to reveal his affective state to the *Anwalt*, which otherwise remains undisclosed. Yet as the *Anwalt* indicates, there is always a potential discrepancy between state and expression, so that it is potentially impossible to deduce one from the other. Thus, the *Anwalt* in this pithy response is drawing parallels with the relationship between affective state and expression, and the stage's attempts to reproduce those same affective expressions. How can the stage have any claims to truth if every affective expression created by an actor is potentially feigned? By demonstrating the unreliable relationship between affective state and expression, the *Anwalt* not only effectively undermines any truth claims in regard to the stage, but also relies on a distinction that lies at the core of the natural acting paradigm.

According to the *Anwalt*, the critical standard with which to approach the theater is not whether theatrical performances appear true ("wahr scheinen"), but rather what he refers to as "daß sie vielmehr nur einen Schein des Wahren haben."[180] Once the *Anwalt* demonstrates the prevalence of theatrical art forms such as opera that have no pretension to representing reality on the stage, the *Zuschauer* begins to reevaluate whether *Täuschung*, according to which the principle of verisimilitude operates, accurately describes the relationship between audience and stage. The *Anwalt* derides the notion of the stage as a kind of *Naturwerk* in a parable of an ape who mistakes a scientist's copper replicas of beetles for actual beetles and devours his collection. The ape, a pun on the German *äffen* meaning to mimic, represents for the *Anwalt* the uneducated audience member who mistakes art for reality. According to the rationale of aesthetic autonomy, art operates according to its own rules and its merits are not determined by how closely it is able to mimic reality.

[180]Ibid.

At its core “Über Wahrscheinlichkeit und Wahrheit der Kunstwerke” anticipates many of the assumptions found in Schiller’s introduction to *Die Braut von Messina*: the rejection of the notion of theatrical *Täuschung* and the accentuation of the artistry of the performance instead of its erasure. In a similar manner as Schiller’s *Der Geisterseher*, this text also reveals how the actor’s ability to feign or contain an affect undermines his own aspirations. Goethe develops this further and demonstrates how the discrepancy between affective state and expression are fundamentally at odds with any truth claims. As a result, the aspirations to produce the appearance of corporeal spontaneity through affect no longer carried the theatrical weight in Weimar that they once did, and thus no longer appear in its acting discourse.

“Über Wahrscheinlichkeit und Wahrheit der Kunstwerke” not only seeks to demolish the notion that the theater is involved in *Täuschung* and the strict imitation of nature, but also to erect a new understanding of the relationship between *Kunst* and *Natur* in its place. During the course of the dialogue the *Zuschauer* learns the errors of his assumptions about the relationship between the stage and audience, but a final question remains puzzling to him. If a performance is not trying to copy nature, how can the *Anwalt* account for the similarities between the two, asking “Warum erscheint auch mir ein vollkommnes Kunstwerk als ein Naturwerk?”[181] The *Anwalt* responds that works of art are the products of humans, who exist in nature, so there will be some correspondences between art and nature. The work of art contains elements of nature that are reorganized by the artist. “Indem die zerstreuten Gegenstände in eins gefaßt und selbst die gemeinste in ihrer Bedeutung und Würde aufgenommen werden, so ist es über die Natur.” Like Goethe’s parable of the ape, the “gemeine Liebhaber” are unable to see the unity in the work of art, and view it only in terms of its reference to nature. The “wahre Liebhaber” notices not only the resemblance to nature, but more importantly, how it was chosen and constructed,

[181]Goethe, *Sämtliche Werke*, Band 4.2, 95

and how it surpasses nature by creating its own self-contained "kleine Welt." Goethe continues that the artist "fühlt, daß er sich aus seinem zerstreuten Leben sammeln, mit dem Kunstwerke wohne, es wiederholt anschauen und sich selbst dadurch eine höhere Existenz geben müsse."[182]

The *Anwalt*'s response provides a critical understanding of Goethe's Weimar aesthetic by laying the seeds for a conflict that will pit his theatrical vision against that of his actors. Goethe views the work of art as a self-contained unit that draws upon the object of reality and reassembles it according to its own alternative order. By proposing that the elements of nature constitute the work of art as an explanation for the similarities between art and nature, the nature in the work of art is rendered into a means by which art is achieved, and therefore subordinated to the inner order of art (as opposed to the external order of nature). Absent from the dialogue is a concern as to how subordination of nature to art practically takes place in a theatrical setting. The question naturally arises as to how the theatrical work of art, which consists of a distinctly human element, manipulates the medium of the performance, the actor's body, in such a way that it is congruent with the work of art. In more ways than one the actor's body represents a site of resistance to the intentions of the director since it is no simple task to abstract the elements that belong to the actor's person from the character the actor plays. Creating a work of art that operates according to its own logic requires its components to be completely malleable. In the theater the implements with which a director works are actors, autonomous beings that have a tendency for being unpredictable. As a result, Goethe's theatrical endeavors seek to contain and control their foremost obstacle: the autonomy of the body. The autonomy of the work of art depends on the director's control of the autonomous parts of the actor's body. To compensate for this issue, Goethe's approach to the art of acting attempts to minimize the potential pitfalls of

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[182]For a more detailed discussion of Goethe's notion of the relation between art and nature in this essay as a part of his idealistic stance, see Flemming, *Goethe und das Theater seiner Zeit*, 130-34.

working with human bodies by instituting corporeal regimes for retraining actors to be compliant with his system. By setting up the composition of art as nature, the foundation is laid for the main conflict in his "Regeln für Schauspieler".

Regeln für Schauspieler

In contrast to "Weimarisches Theater" and "Über Wahrheit und Wahrscheinlichkeit der Kunstwerke" Goethe's "Regeln für Schauspieler" was originally an informal document not intended for publication, and it is only though a series of indirect sources that the modern reader has access to them. The rules emerged out of a series of meetings in 1803 Goethe had with two promising young actors, Pius Alexander Wolff and Karl Franz Grüner. Once Goethe was convinced of their acting potential, he began to instruct them in the conventions of his theater. Both Wolff and Grüner took notes from this conversation, which might have been at the behest of Goethe. Goethe's secretary Johann Ludwig Geist copied these notes, with some corrections by Goethe. The Weimar librarian kept all three manuscripts until Johann Peter Eckermann formalized them in 1824. Eckermann claims he discussed the editing process with Goethe and had his permission to revise the texts, however it is unclear to what extent Goethe was involved.[183]

The convoluted transmission of the "Regeln für Schauspieler" correspondingly complicates attempts to derive an understanding of Goethe's theater on the basis of its multiple modifications and variations. If the final version is largely a product created by Eckermann over twenty years after the fact, to what extent can it be utilized for questions pertaining to the theater? Dieter Borchmeyer comes down hard against the this final version, claiming: "Die

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[183]Wolff's notes were later rediscovered in 1949. For a comparison of Wolff's notes with Eckermann's formalized rules, see Walter Hinck, "Der Bewegungsstil der Weimarer Bühne. Zum Problem des Allegorischen bei Goethe" In *Goethe: Neue Folge des Jahrbuchs der Goethe-Gesellschaft*, Bd. 21 (1959), 94-106.

Regeln für Schauspieler sind im Grunde kein Goethesches, sondern ein Eckermannsches Werk, das wegen seiner Überbewertung mehr Schaden als Nutzen für das Verständnis der Weimarschen Theaterreform gestiftet hat."[184] Although a warranted objection, to dismiss the rules as belonging to Eckermann rather than Goethe would be to deprive us of a critical source for the acting practices of the Weimar Theater. The most significant change Eckermann implemented was the reorganizing of the theatrical prescriptions into a series of concise and numbered rules, which give a draconian impression of Weimar Theater. Once we have taken into account that the formal quality was applied retrospectively, then a critical understanding can still be gleaned from them. The original spirit of the rules has for the most part been preserved in the text's content, which is my primary focus of analysis here.

"Regeln für Schauspieler" distinguishes itself from the previously discussed texts by not merely outlining the ideals of the stage, but also by prescribing how the ideal can be realized in practice. Goethe addresses the various manifestations of the body on the stage, ranging from the position and movement of the body to language (dialect, pronunciation, declamation). The text also refers to the positioning and grouping of bodies on the stage. Such an attention to the actor's bearing on stage was largely unprecedented in the discourse of acting practices in German-speaking countries.[185]

"Regeln für Schauspieler" can be viewed as a practical application of the theoretical aspects of "Über Wahrheit und Wahrscheinlichkeit." Just as in Goethe's essay, his "Regeln für Schauspieler" consciously demarcates itself from the natural acting paradigm. The art of the

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[184]Borchmeyer, *Weimarer Klassik,* 379.

[185]The only exception to this is Franciscus Lang's "Dissertatio de actione scenica." Lang, a Jesuit priest and theater director in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, displays many similarities with Goethe's aesthetic, such as the elevation of art over direct imitations of nature, but remained unrecognized in the acting discourse till the end of the nineteenth century. See Lang, *Abhandlung über die Schauspielkunst*.

actor is more than just imitating nature, but also consists of representing nature ideally, so that "er also in seiner Darstellung das Wahre mit dem Schönen zu vereinigen habe." As a consequence, attempts to consciously create a *Naturwerk* on the stage are categorically rejected. Instead of Diderot's fourth wall that attempts to diminish the theatricality of the stage, Goethe asserts "der Schauspieler muß stets bedenken, dass er um des Publikums willen da ist"[186] and "Die Schauspieler sollen nicht aus mißverstandner Natürlichkeit unter einander spielen, als wenn kein Dritter dabei wäre, sie dürfen daher nie im Profil spielen noch den Zuschauern den Rücken wenden.“[187]

One would expect that "Regeln für Schauspieler" would assert itself against the *Täuschungsästhetik* found in "Über die Wahrheit und Wahrscheinlichkeit." To a certain extent, this is exactly what takes place in prescriptions for the actors to face the audience instead of themselves. Yet as much as the aesthetics of deception are the great enemy that Goethe strives to displace, he never quite fully extracts his aesthetics from this view. In a passage on the appropriate form of speech on the stage, Goethe claims that actors' use of abbreviated colloquial language can lead to an audience that is "das Publikum aus der Täuschung gerissen.“[188]

Goethe's use of *Täuschung* demands further treatment before proceeding, since it reveals what is at stake in both the natural acting paradigm and in his and Schiller's Weimar aesthetics from the previous chapter.[189] Although Goethe is ostensibly against the notion of *Täuschung*, a

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[186]Goethe, *Sämtliche Werke*, Band 6.2, 735.

[187]Ibid., 735.

[188]Ibid., 726.

[189]Much of this analysis is predicated on the assumption that Eckermann's version of "Regeln für Schauspieler" merely reorganized the form of Goethe's notes and that the content remains primarily Goethe's doing. This is particularly critical for approaching whether *Täuschung* was Goethe's word choice or not. Regardless, as was evident in the discussion of Schiller's Weimar aesthetics, the notion of *Täuschung* is implicit in many of their aesthetic assumptions and it is entirely consistent with the remainder of the "Regeln für Schauspieler."

position he strongly advocated for in "Über Wahrheit und Wahrscheinlichkeit der Kunstwerke," in this passage he employs deception as one of the utmost objectives of the theater. Similar to Schiller, Goethe is re-appropriating the notion of *Täuschung*. In doing he reveals how *Täuschung* in both Weimar Classicism and the natural acting paradigm are based on the notion of concealing the medium for the sake of production on the stage. In the natural acting paradigm *Täuschung* is used to describe a state by which the elements of the stage, primarily actors, are used to create the appearance of a *Naturwerk*. The *Naturwerk* of the stage is only an appearance—in reality it is actually just the product of *Kunst*, namely actors who have been deliberately trained to conceal the elements that would emphasize the play's theatricality. This understanding of *Täuschung* as concealing the means in favor of the end product is precisely Goethe's understanding, although the means and the product are reversed. For Goethe, who aspires to create a *Kunstwerk* instead of a *Naturwerk*, the task of *Täuschung* is to conceal the components of the work of art. As was discussed in the "Über die Wahrheit und Wahrscheinlichkeit," the components of the work of art derive from the same world of nature that the natural paradigm attempts to construct on the stage, but are consciously reorganized to create a new world, one that doesn't refer to reality. This process of reorganization requires manipulating the components so that they fit together without their own material status becoming dominant. In order to become a *Kunstwerk*, the components of the work of art must completely conceal their point of origin. Instead of nature concealing the fact that it is a work of art, for Goethe the work of art has to conceal that it is a *Naturwerk*. *Täuschung* is effectively an unwanted reminder that a work of art is in actuality just composed of elements from nature.

The notion of the work of art concealing its own medium has been repeatedly explored in the previous chapters. Lessing proposes in the *Laokoon* that poetic language presents images so

vivid that its verbal medium no longer dominates. Schiller's notion of the work of art from the *Kaliasbriefe* distracts the viewer from the materials comprising it. Goethe's notion of the art of acting has to repress the baggage that accompanies the implements of his art, actors, so that they conform to his work of art. Effectively this notion of the work of art would find purchase in other forms of artistic media. The painter whose pigment consists of crushed organic and inorganic matter such as stones or plants would hardly be satisfied if an uncrushed flower petal managed to make its way into his canvas. Goethe's endeavor as a theater director is even more difficult than that of the painter, since actors are not as easily manipulated and pressed into conformity as the materials for creating paint. As autonomous beings, actors enter the stage with idiosyncrasies that resist conformity. The main purpose of his "Regeln für Schauspieler" is to mold actors in his image so that their performance contains no elements associated with their person, to reveal the elements of acting that readily resist the intervention of the director and to retrain them.

One of the more prominent instances of this erasing of idiosyncrasies associated with the actor's person can be found in Goethe's rules for speech. Goethe's acting troupe consisted of a diverse body of persons, coming from such areas in the German-speaking world as Alsace, Austria, and Estonia, and speaking with their own noticeable dialect and accent. In addition to dialect was the use of colloquial speech, namely the syllables in words that are dropped. Both dialect and colloquial speech function as sign of the natural material that makes the work of art (the person of the actor), and are thus out of sync with the work of art as a whole. Goethe proclaims "Kein Provinzialismus taugt auf die Bühne!" and that "wer mit Angewohnheiten des Dialekts zu kämpfen hat, halte sich an die allgemeinen Regeln der deutschen Sprache."[190]

While dialects and colloquial speech present difficulties for the director, much more difficult to correct are the aspects of the actor's body that do not conform to the work of art. One

[190]Ibid., 725

of the more memorable rules in the "Regeln für Schauspieler" is the prohibition of handkerchiefs. Rule 74 states "Der Schauspieler lasse kein Schnupftuch auf dem Theater sehen, noch weniger schnaube er die Nase, noch weniger spucke er aus; es ist schrecklich, innerhalb eines Kunstproduktes an diese Natürlichkeit erinnert zu werden."[191] In a certain sense, the use of a handkerchief or spitting could be seen as violations of the rules for propriety, yet this is not Goethe's main objection. As a bodily function that exists in the person of the actor and not in the character, a handkerchief represents an infringement on the part of reality onto the artistic integrity of the stage, a trace of the real that can disrupt the illusion of the stage. While it is possible to retrain an actor's use of speech, to retrain the body not to produce mucus at inconvenient moments presents a more difficult obstacle. It represents the spontaneous aspects of the body that Goethe seeks to control but are ultimately beyond his immediate reach.

"Regeln für Schauspieler" creates no room for contingency of the unexpected. This is of particular concern for the actor's body. "Jeder Teil des Körpers stehe daher ganz in seiner Gewalt, so daß er jedes Glied, gemäß dem zu erzielenden Ausdruck, frei, harmonisch und mit Grazie gebrauchen könne."[192] With a single stroke Goethe excludes not only the emotionalist actor, but also any other form of acting that relies on bodily automation and the activation of a spontaneous state. Corporeal movements are identical with the intention of the actor, which ideally are also identical with the intention of the director, which are an attempt to minimize the spontaneity of the body. Manipulating an actor's emotions would constitute perhaps the most daunting challenge for a director. As autonomous beings, actors already have difficulty conforming to the will of the director. The director who seeks to guide affective expression in accordance with the work of art is thus twice-removed from this task, since in addition to the

[191]Ibid., 742

[192]Ibid., 735

potential for the actor and director's intentions being out of sync with one another, the actors can also exhibit affective expressions that are independent of their intentions. By avoiding conventional depictions of everyday life, the performance is able to adhere to its own rules as opposed to ones that are externally determined.

Goethe's regulation of an actor's comportment was not limited to their performances on the stage, and "Regeln für Schauspieler" extends its domain of influence into the off-stage lives of the actors as well. While the regulation of actors on stage performances stands in the tradition of Franciscus Lang, mitigating their problematic offstage behavior also has important predecessors: Konrad Ekhof and Friedrich Ludwig Schröder. In contrast to Lang, Goethe was well acquainted with the work of both Ekhof and Schröder. Their prescriptions target the moment when the off-stage behavior collides with the onstage performance: organizational meetings and dress rehearsals. Ekhof led the first acting academy, the *Schönemannische Gesellschaft* in Germany in the early 1750s at a time before rehearsals in the modern sense were conceived. Instead his acting troupe would meet regularly and read their parts aloud, bring up concerns about the plays, and discuss various acting methods. Ekhof's actor academy was bound by a kind of charter that sought primarily to regulate behavior of the attendants of their meetings, outlining such expectations as prohibitions against lateness and drunkenness, the procedures for taking leaves of absence, and the penalties (usually a monetary sum) for those who deviate from the rules.[193] These meetings were strictly organized since they were the only moment of group preparation before a performance. By the time Schröder served as theater director in Hamburg, more formalized rehearsals were introduced, for which he provided his own prescriptions. Schröder's regulations focus mostly on dress rehearsals and performances, such as the proper

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[193]See Heinz Kindermann, *Conrad Ekhofs Schauspieler-Akademie* (Wien: Rudolf M. Rohrer, 1955).

care of costumes, including the expectations and responsibilities of the various positions that constitute the performance.[194]

Much of the prescriptions of Ekhof and Schröder can be viewed as attempts to insert discipline into a profession known for its unruly and unpredictable behavior. Yet in both cases this intervention into off-stage behavior has a direct bearing on what appears on stage, since the quality of a rehearsal usually has a direct affect on the actual performance. What distinguishes Goethe's off-stage prescriptions from Ekhof and Schröder is that they place more emphasis on the actor's private life. He maintains the "Schauspieler soll auch im gemeinen Leben bedenken, daß er öffentlich zur Kunstschau stehen werde" and "so soll der Schauspieler auch außer der Bühne trachten, selbe zu erhalten; er soll sich immer einen Platz von Zuschauern vor sich denken."[195] To a certain extent, this attempts to improve the social status of a profession that has for centuries existed on the fringes of society. If actors were to exert the same level of self-control in their everyday lives as their art requires of them on the stage, then the common prejudices that actors are unable to maintain self-control and give in to their basic desires would be more difficult to maintain. As much as Goethe was invested in the social improvement of actors, his "Regeln für Schauspieler" displays an additional motive.

> Dagegen ist es eine wichtige Regel für den Schauspieler, daß er sich bemühe, seinem Körper, seinem Betragen, ja allen seinen übrigen Handlungen im gewöhnlichen Leben eine solche Wendung zu geben, daß er dadurch gleichsam wie in einer beständigen Übung erhalten werde. Es wird dieses für jeden Teil der Schauspielkunst von unendlichem Vorteil sein.[196]

If social improvement of the actor was indeed one of Goethe's goals, it appears in "Regeln für Schauspieler" as no more than a desirable side effect of another more prominent aim. Goethe

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[194]See *Annalen des Theaters*, ed. Christian August von Bertram, no. 9 (Berlin: Friedrich Mauer, 1792), 4-22.

[195]Goethe, *Sämtliche Werke*, Band 6.2, 742-43.

[196]Ibid., 742-43.

here views explicitly the comportment of the actor off the stage as an extension of and contributor to his on-stage presence. On the surface level this prescription effectively extends the role of the rehearsal into everyday life and thereby represents more time outside of official meetings to which the actor can dedicate his art. If the Weimar Theater can be viewed as a kind of school, this would constitute their homework. Yet this is far from being merely additional practice time for an actor. If the greatest obstacles to the theatrical work of art are the undesirable traces the actor brings from his everyday life, then Goethe seeks to regulate that very behavior for the benefit of the stage. In the process of incorporating the rules for actors into the basic behavioral norms off the stage, the rules become internalized and automated. On the general point of his rules, Goethe claims: "Diese trachte man sich so sehr einzuverleiben, daß sie zur zweiten Natur werden."[197] The word choice here of *einverleiben* is telling in that it highlights that the regulation of the actor's body is an internal policing rather than an external one, so that the difference between off and on stage comportment no longer presents a difficulty for the director. Goethe is also dealing here with a harsh practicality of the stage: the persistent issue of actors clinging to the notion of the theater as the imitation of nature. By incorporating the rules of onstage propriety off the stage, the imitated nature becomes an extension of Goethe's theatrical work of art, and eliminates the unwanted traces of reality by changing reality itself.

Goethe's Reintroduction of the Theatrical Mask

The disciplining of the actor's body through prescriptive rules is one means of diminishing its unpredictability and rendering it compliant with Goethe's theatrical endeavor. This is further attested to in his introduction of the mask to the stage. The importance of the introduction of the masks is attested to by its inclusion in Goethe's periodization from the

[197]Ibid., 734.

Weimarisches Theater. According to Goethe the performance of Terence's *Brothers* ushered in the latest phase of the Weimar Theater. Goethe distinguishes *Brothers* as the first public performance with masks, which "das Publikum sich an einer derben, charakteristischen, sinnlich-künstlichen Darstellung erfreuen könne."[198]

Goethe never explained in detail his reasons for reintroducing masks in the early nineteenth century. The use of masks was prevalent in the form of courtly masquerades, many of which Goethe personally orchestrated at Weimar. The mask, however, was unconventional for the standing theaters of the German-speaking lands. One contemporary tradition of theatrical masks well known to Goethe is the *commedia dell'arte*. During his travels in Italy in 1786 Goethe encountered masks during an extemporized play. The performance, which featured masks "von der Wirklichkeit abgerückt," impressed Goethe. "Ich habe aber auch nicht leicht natürlicher agieren sehen als jene Masken, so wie es nur bei einem ausgezeichnet glücklichen Naturell durch längere Übung erreicht werden kann."[199] Two days later he watched a play by Gozzi, which also featured masks. The manner in which these two performances diverge from the natural acting paradigm is comparable to another performance Goethe encountered in Italy. In his essay "Frauenrollen, auf dem Römischen Theater durch Männer gespielt" Goethe reports his sentiments after witnessing a performance in which men played the female roles. Goethe reveals how despite his initial prejudices in regard to a performance in drag, he was overall very pleased with it. These initial prejudices appear to have less to do with conforming to gender roles and more to do with what the drag show represents in terms of breaking the illusion of the stage. "Ich dachte der Ursache nach und glaube sie darin gefunden zu haben, daß bei einer solchen

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[198]Ibid., 695.

[199]Goethe, *Sämtliche Werke,* Band 15, 93. This is of course Goethe's stylized account of his journey written much later in his *Italienische Reise*. The sentiment expressed here does reflect however the original account of the performance from his diary in 1786. Compare with Band 3.1, 103-04.

Vorstellung der Begriff der Nachahmung, der Gedanke an immer lebhaft blieb und durch das geschickte Spiel nur eine Art von selbstbewußter Illusion hervorgebracht wurde."[200] The masks and the drag show reveal the beginnings of a shift in Goethe's theatrical aesthetics in which he begins to reconceptualize the notion of theatrical illusion, one which places a performance's artistic integrity above the imitation of nature.

As much as these performances in Italy anticipate Goethe's theatrical aesthetic around 1800, they conflict with it in one critical way. *Commedia dell'arte*, the theatrical genre most associated with the use of masks in the eighteenth century is heavily based on improvisation. Goethe's theatrical paradigm actively excludes extemporization, as was demonstrated earlier in this chapter. His use of masks in this case thus reinscribes the mask as non-extemporaneous. Although the repertoire of Weimar contained at least one play from *commedia dell'arte* featuring masks, Schiller's revision of Gozzi's *Turandot*, it is unlikely that any scenes were improvised.

If Goethe's notion of the theatrical mask remained consistent with his remarks on the *commedia dell'arte*, which he characterizes as a mode of art that does not strive to imitate nature but rather to elevate its own artistic presence, then masks would well serve his theatrical aesthetic in Weimar. Yet as much as this aesthetic likely draws on the Italian theatrical tradition, there is a more pressing precursor for the mask in his theatrical endeavors: the Greek and Roman theater.[201] The two most notable performances featuring masks, Terence's *Brothers* and August Wilhelm Schlegel's *Ion*, were deliberate attempts to draw on this tradition. While Goethe falls silent on his reasoning for the masks, Schlegel's account of the use of the mask in antiquity in his

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[200]Goethe, *Sämtliche Werke,* Band 3.2, 173.

[201]Wiens claims that since Goethe is primarily drawing on the theater of antiquity, which featured only male actors, his use of the mask is inscribed as male. Yet as previously discussed, Goethe's use of the mask also recalls *commedia dell'arte*, and as will be later discussed, the eighteenth-century tradition of French ballet, both of which included women. See Wiens *"Grammatik" der Schauspielkunst*, 162-65.

Vorlesungen über die Dramatische Kunst und Literatur provides a point of comparison with which we can better conceptualize Goethe's reintroduction. Given originally as a series of lectures in Vienna in 1808, Schlegel observes some practical aspects of the mask in ancient Greece, where they were used (in addition to the cothurnus) to augment the appearance of the actor and make him more visible for a large audience. In contrast to the Athenians, whose amphitheater could seat an audience of up to 10,000, the Weimar Theater could only house a few hundred and thus the need for visual amplification likely did not play a determining role. Much more congruent with the aesthetic of Weimar Classicism are some of the other reasons Schlegel provides. According to Schlegel, the ancient Greek use of masks attests to their commitment to the idealism of the stage. Masks, as a part of the general gesture, would first strive to depict an ideal such as heroism, dignity, beauty or grace in the form of a person. Character and passionate expression were subordinated to the depiction of the ideal. Although the mask seems to constitute a kind of makeshift depiction, the true compromise of values lies in

> einen Schauspieler mit gemeinen, unedlen, auf jeden Fall mit allzu individuellen Zügen einen Apoll oder Herkules darstellen zu lassen; ja diese hätte ihnen für eine wahre Entweihung gegolten. Wie wenig vermag selbst der im Mienenspiel geübteste Schauspieler den Charakter seiner Züge zu verändern! Und dies hat doch auf den Ausdruck der Leidenschaft einen nachteiligen Einfluß, da alle Leidenschaft vom Charakter eine besondere Färbung erhält.[202]

Schlegel depicts in this passage the double function of the mask: the projection of the ideal that simultaneously conceals the person of the actor. The mask fulfills its ideal representation by containing no characteristics that are particular to a single person, since to represent heroic persons or gods with the conventional and individualistic facial features of an actor would have been regarded as highly impertinent. The act of producing an image of the ideal is at the same time a concealment of the body of the actor. The mask effectively renders futile the facial

[202]August Wilhelm Schlegel, *Vorlesungen über dramatische Kunst und Literatur*, Erster Teil (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1966), 54-55.

contortions often associated in modern times with skilled actors. The depiction of emotional expression is further obviated. Noteworthy is Schlegel's double entendre with the word *Färbung*. *Färbung* refers to the bestowing of individual characteristics for a particular role, precisely what the Greeks according to Schlegel were trying to avoid, as well as the change in skin coloring such as blushing and blanching associated with strong affects.

Schlegel's interpretation of the mask of Greek drama as that which conceals and thereby renders an actor's affective expression ineffective has found concurrence in many of Goethe's contemporaries. Four decades earlier, Lessing notices this additional aspect of the mask in the *Hamburgische Dramaturgie.* In a discussion of producing affect on the stage, he writes

> Es ist dieses nicht der einzige Fall, in welchem man die Abschaffung der Masken betauern möchte. Der Schauspieler kann ohnstreitig unter der Maske mehr Contenance halten; seine Person findet weniger Gelegenheit auszubrechen; und wenn sie ja ausbricht, so werden wir diesen Ausbruch weniger gewahr.[203]

As was previously discussed, the affective display entailed in Lessing's mediated gestures constitutes one of the most difficult goals an actor can achieve. Lessing in this moment envies the aesthetics of his ancient predecessors, whose utilization of theatrical masks obviated the need to theorize about how to stage affect.[204] The mask represents the two fundamental issues of affect on the stage: there is no need to produce affect if the audience cannot view it, and if an actor were to become affected on the stage, then there are no significant repercussions for a lingering affect that cannot be repressed when a change in scene demands it. This is precisely the issue of the containment of affects that Lessing addresses with the problem of slapping on the stage.

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[203]Lessing, *Werke und Briefe, Bd. 6*, 460.

[204]Schlegel is puzzled in the *Vorlesungen* on how the Greeks represented affected states on the stage while masked. He initially proposes that masks could be switched between scenes, but this would be unfeasible with a change of affect during a scene. He ultimately declines to speculate further on this matter.

Concealing the actor's body behind a mask as a means to diminish the uncertainty of the actor's body was likely alluring for Goethe's theatrical paradigm.

Karl Böttiger echoes much of this sentiment in direct reference to Goethe's use of the mask. A journalist and public intellectual who specialized in archeology and classics, Böttiger reviewed the performance of Brothers in the *Journal des Luxus und der Moden*, concentrating primarily on the difficulty of reintroducing the masks of antiquity in the modern theater. Although for Böttiger staging classical drama without masks would be to tear "den Köper von der Seele," he claims in a footnote that there is an additional advantage of masks on the contemporary stage: "Und wenn man aufhören will, die Beweglichkeit gewisser Gesichtsmuskeln (denn die Hauptsache, Bewegung des Kopfs und der Augen bleibt auch hinter der Maske) für das höchste der Schauspielkunst im Mienenspiel zu preisen und – zu entwickeln."[205] While Lessing views masks largely in terms of their practicality, fantasizing about how they would make acting easier, Böttiger draws attention to their aesthetic advantages. Masks effectively displace the natural acting paradigm, since they deny individual actors the display of their corporeal finesse and instead favor a hollowed out actor, onto whom the director can inscribe any meaning he wishes. Böttiger recalls the attitude of the audience after the performance of *Brothers*, in which "Mancher freute sich des neuen Mittels, den Schauspielern ihre uns nur zu sehr ansprechende Persönlichkeit zu rauben und gleichsam für jedes Stück eine ganz neue Gesellschaft von Künstlern zu erschaffen."[206] As with Goethe, masks become a tool for the stage that abstracts the corporeal idiosyncrasies from the art of the actor and from his person that would potentially resist the idealistic depiction of the performance.

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[205]Karl Böttiger, "Die Brüder des Terenz mit Masken aufgeführt; auf dem Hoftheater in Weimar" in *Journal des Luxus und der Moden* (Nov. 1801), 615-16.

[206]Böttiger, "Die Brüder des Terenz mit Masken aufgeführt," 621.

The advantages of the theatrical mask that Böttiger and Goethe valorize were not universally recognized. For Jean-Georges Noverre, perhaps the most prominent eighteenth-century theorist and practitioner of ballet, the notion of removing corporeal expressions was antithetical to the naturalism that the theater ought to be striving for. He views the French ballet performances before his rise to prominence in the 1750s as burdened by elaborate costumes that hindered free movements. For Noverre the face is a focal point of a performance that provides meaning to all other movements of the body. Operating within the paradigm of the spontaneity and instantaneousness of affect demonstrated thus far, he observes "It requires no time for the face to express its meaning forcibly; a flash of lightning comes from the heart, shines in the eyes and illumining every feature, heralds the conflicts of passions, and reveals, so to speak, the naked soul."[207] The mask, also a prominent feature of the ballet, effectively deprives dance of its affective signifier by concealing expressions, replacing the range and subtlety of the human face with a cold and lifeless piece of cardboard. As a result, Noverre advocates "banishing the mask from dancing."[208] For Goethe, the theatrical convention Noverre rails against represents another tradition he can draw on.

As the ballet master at several European courts, Noverre's reforms reworked the landscape of dance. At the same time, his *Letters on Dancing and Ballets* were written over forty years before Goethe became the indendant of the Weimar Theater. His distrust of the mask, however, reflects a sentiment that would continue among Goethe's troupe. Carl Reinhold, the disgruntled former actor, composed following his departure from Weimar a polemic against Goethe's theater, "Saat von Göthe gesäet," which suspiciously views masks as an attack on the art of the actor. Reinhold, who was present in Goethe's mask experiments in the first few years

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[207]Jean-George Noverre, *Letters on Dancing and Ballets* (Alton, Hampshire: Dance Books, 2004), 78.

[208]Noverre, *Letters on Dancing and Ballets*, 78.

following the turn of the century, claims from the performance of Terence's *Brothers* that the mask was the most remarkable feature of the vast majority of the cast. Against the masks he writes

> Eben so wenig werde ich mich dabei aufhalten, die in die Sinne fallende Unzulänglichkeit der Masken für die Bühne zu erweisen, welche beinahe den größten Theil der Kunst, die Mimik, gänzlich ausschließen, sondern einen flüchtigen Ueberblick auf die Darstellung selbst werfen.[209]

For Reinhold, Goethe's introduction of the mask deprives actors of the ability to display their most remarkable aspect of their art: corporeal control. It is the control of their facial expressions that is particular to the acting profession, and its removal is tantamount to depriving the status of artist to acting.[210] The mask thus represents a struggle between director and actor's artistic claims to the stage. For the actor wishing to display his talent for mimicry, the mask obstructs, while for Goethe it ensures the integrity of the play by removing uncertainties that arise out of those very same mimic talents. As a device in Goethe's *Schauspielkunst*, it is able to perform a double move whereby the repression of the actor's person is given material manifestation, while at the same time externalizing the very rules for control by the director that Goethe is striving for. The covering of the face diminishes the risk of an actor's spontaneous and thereby undesirable corporeal expression. The inanimate contours of the mask are not subject to the kinds of changes that accompany a living organism. Goethe is surely aware of the role that masks play in depriving the actor of his artistic display, but to acknowledge this fact would be effectively letting actors know they are merely a means for Goethe's art. By not acknowledging this blatant function of the mask, Goethe is effectively masking his intentions. The mask functions as a kind

[209]*Saat von Göthe gesäet dem Tage der Garben zu reifen. Ein Handbuch für Ästhetiker und junge Schauspieler*, (Weimar and Leipzig, 1808) 138.

[210]The acclaimed actor Eduard Genast, son of Anton Genast, an actor from the Weimar troupe, writes of his father's experience that while not going as far as Reinhold's critique of the mask, notes that it created difficulties in the *Brothers* performance. See Eduard Genast *Aus dem Tagebuche eines alten Schauspielers* (Leipzig: Voigt & Günther, 1862), 121.

of insurance policy for the *Regeln für Schauspieler*, an external intervention in case the internal policed behavior fails. It is thus no coincidence that Goethe uses the metaphor of the mask to describe the skills of Iffland of subjugating the person of the actor to the role.[211]

Die Wahlverwandtschaften

Goethe's experiments with theatrical masks failed to leave a lasting mark on the Weimar Theater and were largely restricted to a brief period between 1800 and 1802. Yet as was attested by his "Regeln für Schauspieler" the disciplining of the actor's body would continue for the remainder of his tenure. This persistent interest pertains not only to Goethe's particular role as theater director, but extends into his fictional world in *Die Wahlverwandtschaften*. The conflict between spontaneity and the discipline of the actor's body manifests in the events involving the performance of the tableaux vivants from Book II. Tableaux vivants, an artistic genre whose popularity emerged at the end of the eighteenth century and extended throughout the nineteenth, typically situates actors on a stage in an imitation of a painting. Actors attempt to restrict all movements and appear as still as possible, in order to mimic the appearance of a painting in three dimensions. The actors as a result effectively appear as living statues.

The importance of the statuesque for acting does not limit itself to the production of the tableaux vivants, and functions as a principle for Goethe's acting aesthetic in general. Throughout his career Goethe appealed to painting and the plastic arts as a model for which actors can improve their art. In the "Regeln für Schauspieler" Goethe conceptualizes the theater as "ein figurloses Tableau [...] worin der Schauspieler die Staffage macht."[212] Goethe did not

[211]Goethe remarks that Iffland understands how to mask his role ("womit seine Rollen […] zu maskieren versteht"). Goethe, *Sämtliche Werke,* Band 6.2, 694.

[212]Ibid., 744.

stop holding painting and the plastic arts in high regard towards the end of his life, as a conversation with Eckermann demonstrates

> Ein Schauspieler, sagte Goethe, sollte eigentlich auch bei einem Bildhauer und Maler in die Lehre gehen. So ist ihm um einen griechischen Helden dazustellen, durchaus nötig, daß er die auf uns gekommen antiken Bildwerke wohl studiert und sich die ungesuchte Grazie ihres Sitzens, Stehens und Gehens wohl eingeprägt habe.[213]

Even before examining the tableaux vivants scenes that take place in *Die Wahlverwandtschaften*, some similarities between Goethe's disciplining of actors' bodies and his notion of them as related to the plastic arts become apparent. Tableaux vivants are an enhanced version of Goethe's "Regeln für Schauspieler," in which his aspirations for actors to follow the example of painting and sculpture are taken to the next level: the stillness of these arts is transposed onto living beings. By setting the internal order of the work of art as one determined by complete stillness, the tableau vivant creates a set of higher expectations for actors, ones that require an unparalleled level of bodily discipline. In tableaux vivants, the performers must advance the denial of their person to unprecedented levels by repressing their status as living entities. By raising the stakes, the risks of a violation of those rules correspondingly increase.

The tableaux vivants scenes in *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* provide a literary setting with which the tension between actors and director play out. In the novel, the suggestion for the tableaux vivants originally comes from the Graf, who introduces Charlotte's daughter Luciane to "eine neue Art von Darstellung, die ihrer Persönlichkeit sehr gemäß war."[214] The architect, whom the narrator reveals replaced the position of the Hauptmann and Eduard in the narrative, assumes the artistic direction for the performance. If tableaux vivants provide the sense of a still life using living beings as the material, then the architect's involvement in the project is fitting.

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[213] Goethe, *Sämtliche Werke*, Band 19, 551.

[214] Goethe, *Sämtliche Werke*, Band 9, 433.

An architect is a professional who works with materials to create sound structures and buildings that are principally designed not to move, so when structures do move unintentionally, it can and often does have disastrous consequences, such as the collapsing bridge at Ottilie's birthday party. Rather than a conventional theater director, who has to account for the choreography of a performance, the architect's task is to ensure that each figure of the tableau is correctly positioned and displays no movement.

Luciane's arrival at the home of Charlotte and Ottilie produces some adventurous deviation from their daily routine, and her self-centered and exuberant personality is perhaps best encapsulated with the episode of the monkey photos. In a moment of spontaneous anguish, Luciane laments the fact she left her pet monkey behind and briefly contemplates sending someone to fetch it. Without spending any time assessing the options available to her to remedy the situation, she claims that it will suffice to have a picture of the monkey, and that she wants someone to paint it for her. Charlotte offers her a collection of monkey pictures available in their library, which Luciane takes the utmost delight in. This episode plays on Goethe's anecdote from "Über Wahrheit und Wahrscheinlichkeit der Kunstwerke," bestowing the role of the ape on Luciane, who views a photo of a monkey as an equal substitute for her actual pet monkey. Like the ape from Goethe's anecdote, Luciane cannot distinguish reality from artistic representation, a character trait that pervades her behavior. She casts herself as a *Königin*, with the narrator referring to her entourage as a *Hofstaat*, which she orders around as if she possessed royal authority.

Luciane is given a role in each of the first three tableaux vivants presented: van Dyck's *Belisarius*, Poussin's *Esther before Ahasuerus*, and Gerard ter Borch's *The Paternal Admonition*.

Her role as the admonished daughter in ter Borch's painting both culminates and complicates the description of her character.

> Man konnte mit dem Wiederverlangen nicht endigen, und der ganz natürliche Wunsch, einem so schönen Wesen, das man genugsam vor der Rückseite gesehen, auch ins Angesicht zu schauen, nahm dergestalt überhang, dass ein lustiger ungeduldiger Vogel die Worte, die man manchmal an das Ende einer Seite zu schreiben pflegt: tornez s'il vous plaît, laut ausrief und eine allgemeine Beistimmung erregte. Die Darstellenden aber kannten ihren Vorteil zu gut, und hatten den Sinn dieser Kunststück zu wohl gefasst, als dass sie dem allgemeinen Ruf hätten nachgeben sollen. Die beschämt scheinende Tochter blieb ruhig stehen, ohne den Zuschauern den Ausdruck ihres Angesichts zu gönnen; der Vater blieb in seiner ermahnenden Stellung sitzen, und die Mutter brachte Nase und Augen nicht aus dem durchsichtigen Glase, worin sich, ob gleich zu trinken schien, der Wein nicht verminderte.[215]

In this scene Luciane masterfully maintains her motionless position despite an audience that demands the opposite. What is most surprising about this scene is how it defies the expectations of the reader. In addition to muddling the distinction between reality and art, Luciane is characterized as a theatrical personality. The narrator goes to great lengths to portray Luciane as a character who defies predictability, whether by continually changing her clothes and costumes, by taxing servants with unscheduled excursions, or by referring to her domain in theatrical terms as the "Stegereif" and to herself as a kind of "Improvisator." In short, she persistently fails to demonstrate a general capacity to be still ("Luciane konnte nicht rasten"). The restless Luciane appears to be the least capable candidate in the novel to engage in a piece of performance that demands virtually uninterrupted corporeal paralysis on the stage. Based on her previous behavior, she would appear more likely to break out at any moment into an unscheduled performance. By depicting an unpredictable character who is forced restrain all her activities while at the same time engaging in a theatrical mode, the narrator has set up the expectations for a conflict that never actualizes: Luciane not only exerts absolute control of her body, but is also able to maintain her bodily composure in spite of the audience's expectations of the contrary.

[215]Goethe, *Sämtliche Werke*, Band 9, 435.

For an explanation of a character who fails to manifest her spontaneity and theatricality at the very moment it is the most expected, we will turn to how the conditions of her performance were designed to obviate Luciane's unpredictability. In an appendix for his *Absorption and Theatricality*, Michael Fried views this scene as a moment in which Luciane, by having her back turned away from the audience, denies the theatricality of the performance and therefore the beholder.[216] Fried's observation becomes more involved when we account for the fact that the tableau vivant adds another beholder to the scheme between painting and beholder: the actors on the stage are just as much viewing the audience as they audience is viewing the actors. This is particularly the case for the vast majority of Luciane's off-stage performances. Yet by depicting Luciane as absorbed in her activity of the tableau vivant and removing the beholders from her line of sight, she becomes encapsulated within the performance itself. Without the audience, Luciane's theatrical persona vanishes. With the architect as a kind of artistic direction of the whole endeavor, it can be presumed that this was intentional on his part, and that having her turned away from the audience is an attempt to minimize the unpredictability of her character and to contain Luciane by limiting the theatrical potential in the performance.

If we view Luciane's performance in terms of Goethe's acting prescriptions, then an immediate contradiction becomes apparent. Although corresponding with the painting, Luciane's back is turned towards the audience, which according to Goethe is an example of acting out of a sense of realism. Luciane presents a curious case in which Goethe's aesthetics and the natural acting paradigm converge. As an actress whose person continually threatens to disrupt the performance, the only way to ensure the statuesque is to have Luciane deny her own theatricality by depriving her of an audience. Goethe's original intention to elevate the levels of theatricality, to view the theater (see "Regeln für Schauspieler") as a single unit, paradoxically requires that

[216]Fried, *Absorption and Theatricality*, 171-73.

she seal herself off from the remainder of the work of art, rendering the unpredictable Luciane predictable. Just as in the episode with the monkey depictions, Luciane's inability to distinguish art from reality means she can become completely enraptured in the tableaux. In the tableaux vivants, complete corporeal control becomes the highest principle and by removing Luciane's audience, this stillness is achieved in an act of absorption.

Ottilie was not included in any of the original three tableaux vivants, a matter the architect seeks to rectify by organizing two additional ones. The architect asks Ottilie to play Mary in a depiction of the Nativity, to which she "halb verlegen" and with Charlotte's permission agrees. Ottilie's performance is the counter-image to Luciane's. Ottilie's role as Mary, the paragon of moral virtue, further contrasts her with Luciane. By depicting the Nativity as a tableau vivant, the architect has unwittingly created a potential conflict between the subject matter and the medium: the Christ child. In contrast to the other actors, the young boy portraying the Christ child represents the kind of subject that cannot be trained. As an untamed subject the child is at risk of disrupting the illusion of stillness at any moment, and constitutes a persistent threat by means of his spontaneity. "Glücklicherweise," as the narrator remarks, "war das Kind in der anmutigsten Stellung eingeschlafen, so daß nichts die Betrachtung störte."[217] The only state in which this threat is mitigated is sleep.

The greatest contrast between the two performances lies however in their accommodation of spontaneity. While the narrator reports that in her first depiction "Ottiliens Gestalt, Gebärde, Miene, Blick übertraf aber alles, was je ein Maler dargestellt hat" in which image appeared "festgehalten und erstarrt zu sein," in the second depiction an external force enters the picture and disrupts the performance. Once Ottilie perceives an unknown person greeting Charlotte, she struggles to maintain her composure and "ergab sich darein, um keine Störung zu verursachen."

[217] Goethe, *Sämtliche Werke*, Band 9, 444.

Although she initially does not recognize the person, his presence suffices in disrupting Ottilie's otherwise flawless performance.

> Eine wunderbare Empfindung ergriff sie. Wie vieles war begegnet, seitdem sie die Stimme dieses treuen Lehrers nicht vernommen! Wie im zackigen Blitz fuhr die Reihe ihrer Freuden und Leiden schnell vor ihrer Seele vorbei und regte die Frage auf: darfst du ihm alles bekennen und gestehen? Und wie wenig wert bist du unter dieser heiligen Gestalt vor ihm zu erscheinen, und wie seltsam muß es ihm vorkommen, dich, die er nur natürlich, als Maske, zu erblicken? Mit einer Schnelligkeit, die keinesgleichen hat, wirkte Gefühl und Betrachtung in ihr gegeneinander. Ihr Herz war befangen, ihre Augen füllten sich mit Tränen, indem sie sich zwang immerfort als ein starres Bild zu erscheinen; und wie froh war sie, als der Knabe sich zu regen anfing, und der Künstler sich genötiget sah, das Zeichen zu geben, dass der Vorhang wieder fallen sollte.[218]

The element of control in positioning Luciane's back towards the audience is reinforced with Ottilie's performance, since it contains an advantage that is not readily recognizable until Ottilie's second vivant scene: by denying the beholder and depicting herself as absorbed into her depicted activity, she is less susceptible to unexpected audience intrusions that would disrupt her performance. With Ottilie facing the audience, the intervention of the audience becomes an issue. When an unknown figure enters the audience and greets Charlotte, Ottilie becomes affectively charged. Fittingly, Ottilie views her performance as a kind of mask—an image that not only refers to the content of the tableau vivant (she appears as Mary) but also its form: the corporeal restraint demanded by the tableau aims to erase the traces of her person and conceal her true feelings. The metaphorical mask of the tableau vivant cannot resist the spontaneity of her body, and her eyes fill with tears. Ironically it is another act of spontaneity, the awakening of the baby on the stage, which effectively saves Ottilie from a potentially even more embarrassing moment.

Ottilie's affective expression can be viewed in connection with other moments of affective containment in the novel. Once it is revealed during dinner that the Count has found a position for the Hauptmann, thereby removing the necessity of his stay, Charlotte is forced to

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[218]Ibid., 446.

contain her affective expression that hit her "wie ein Donnerschlag." She can only find release once she excuses herself from the company and escapes to the moss hut to cry. The images of thunder and lightning as a simile for the spontaneity and the irrepressible relationship between affective state and expression links Charlotte and Ottilie's affective moments, as well as Schiller's and Noverre's similar descriptions of affective states as discussed previously. In another moment, Eduard breaks out in tears when confessing his love for Ottilie, for which Mittler chastises him on the grounds that it degrades his male dignity. Eduard should rather endure "den Schmerz mit Gleichmut und Anstand."[219] Eduard responds that

> Einen unendlichen Schmerz will der starre Behagliche nicht anerkennen. Es gibt Fälle, ja es gibt deren! wo jeder Trost niederträchtig und Verzweiflung Pflicht ist. Verschmäht doch ein edler Grieche, der auch Helden zu schildern weiß, keineswegs, die seinigen bei schmerzlichem Drange weinen zu lassen. Selbst im Sprichwort sagt er: tränenreiche Männer sind gut. [...] Ich verwünsche die Glücklichen, denen der Unglückliche nur zum Spektakel dienen soll. Er soll sich in der grausamsten Lage körperlicher und geistiger Bedrängnis noch edel gebärden, um ihren Beifall zu erhalten; und damit sie ihm beim Verscheiden noch applaudieren, wie ein Gladiator mit Anstand vor ihren Augen umkommen.[220]

Eduard's response on the nature of affect and audience functions as a critique of societal norms that repress affect for the sake of aesthetic appearances. The form of this critique relies on a counterexample from the artistic realm, the depictions of the noble Greek, and evokes the neo-classical tradition and aesthetic stoicism of Winckelmann. While Eduard retains Winckelmann's notion of the exemplary status of the Greeks, he reinscribes them as a people who also permit heroic depictions to cry. The ambiguity of "schildern" does not inform us specifically of the kind of artist Eduard is referring to, whether sculptor, painter, or actor. Ottilie's performance in the tableaux vivant reveals that in a sense it is all three, where the actress negates her status as a living being and transforms herself into a statue. Furthermore, the repetition of the language of

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[219]Ibid., 397.

[220]Ibid., 397-98.

being rigid and frozen, in both Ottilies' performance on the stage ("ein starres Bild") and Eduard's perception of societal norms ("der starre Behagliche") attests to how societal norms that demand the repression of affective responses of the body differ little from an art form that has the same requirement. Indeed, Goethe even hoped to exploit this correspondence between codes of behavior and artistic representation for the benefit of theatrical performances, as was evident from "Regeln für Schauspieler." Yet whereas Eduard repudiates containing his emotions for the sake of societal norms, and Charlotte is able to maintain control to find more appropriate outlets for their expression, the theatrical setting of the tableaux vivants permits no refuge for Ottilie.

Goethe's Legacy

It is hard to measure the influence of Goethe's theatrical paradigm in Weimar. As much as Goethe and Schiller inveighed against the logic of the natural acting paradigm, their viewpoint never took hold in Germany. Until the end of the nineteenth century, acting practices would continually strive for greater naturalism, culminating in the German-speaking world with Otto Brahm and internationally with Konstantin Stanislavsky's system. Yet in the midst of the domination of the natural acting paradigm there were those who rebelled against it and attempted to extend and develop the legacy of Weimar. Goethe's attempts to minimize the contingency and spontaneity of the actor's body will have an important successor in the early twentieth century: Edward Gordon Craig. Craig explicitly formulates many of the notions that are implicit in Goethe's theatrical aesthetic, and recognizes the necessity of absolute control of the components of the work of art. Yet whereas Goethe strives to operate within the confines that the actor's body imposes on the work of art, Craig draws the opposite conclusion from the same premises.

> Acting is not an art. It is therefore incorrect to speak of the actor as an artist. For accident is an enemy of the artist. Art is the exact antithesis of Pandemonium and Pandemonium is created by the tumbling together of many accidents; Art arrives only by design. Therefore in order to make any work of art it is clear we may only work in those materials with which we can calculate. Man is not one of these materials.[221]

Craig goes on to claim that spontaneity of the human body, particularly an actor's affect, is incompatible with the notion of the work of art.[222] Craig proclaims abolishment of actors and the rise of cryptic "Über-Marionette" that will displace the conventional actor. As will be explored in the final chapter, Craig's formulation was anticipated a century prior by Heinrich von Kleist, who also turns to the model provided by marionettes for overcoming the limitations of the human being for spontaneous theatrical endeavors.

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[221]Cole and Chinoy, *Actors on Acting,* 378.

[222]Not surprisingly Craig also refers to the unpredictability of affect in terms of lightning.

Chapter Four

Relinquishing Sovereignty: Kleist, Improvisation, and Corporeal Reactions

On November 8, 1810 Heinrich von Kleist published an anecdote entitled "Korrespondenz-Nachricht" in his journal *Berliner Abendblätter*. In addition to its light tone and potentially objectionable humor, the anecdote contains a blatant critique of contemporary acting practices.

> Herr Unzelmann, der, seit einiger Zeit, in Königsberg Gastrollen gibt, soll zwar, welches das Entscheidende ist, dem Publico daselbst sehr gefallen: mit den Kritikern aber (wie man auch aus der Königsberger Zeitung ersieht) und mit der Direktion viel zu schaffen haben. Man erzählt, daß ihm die Direktion verboten, zu improvisieren. Hr. Unzelmann der jede Widerspenstigkeit haßt, fügte sich in diesem Befehl: als aber ein Pferd, das man, bei der Darstellung eines Stücks, auf die Bühne gebracht hatte, in Mitten der Bretter, zur großen Bestürzung des Publikums, Mist fallen ließ: wandte er sich plötzlich, indem er die Rede unterbrach, zu dem Pferde und sprach: „hat dir die Direktion nicht verboten, zu improvisieren?" – Worüber selbst die Direktion, wie man versichert, gelacht haben soll.[223]

It is difficult to conceive of a greater affront to the theatrical aesthetics of Weimar Classicism than Kleist's anecdote. Goethe, who had notably in his "Regeln für Schauspieler" banned the handkerchief from the stage on account that it is "schrecklich, innerhalb eines Kunstproduktes an diese Natürlichkeit erinnert zu werden" would have surely been aghast at the prospect of a horse conducting its natural necessities in the theater.[224] The horse's unexpected behavior dramatizes and exaggerates Goethe's deepest fears of corporeal spontaneity on the stage: the automatic

[223]*Heinrich von Kleist. Sämtliche Werke und Briefe,* Band 3 (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1987), 363-364. Subsequent citations to Kleist's work will be embedded as DKV.

[224]Goethe would later resign his position as intendant of the Weimar Theater as a result of another unwanted animal on the stage. See Gerhard Schmidt "Krise und Ende von Goethes Theaterleitung in Weimar" in *Archivalische Zeitschrift*. Vol. 88 (July 2006), 871–882.

processes the body, rather than being a tool for the stage, represent a threat to the aesthetic integrity of the world of art and inevitably result in disgust. The horse represents a kind of body that cannot be subject to the directorial discipline Goethe found necessary to regulate the comportment of actors. Furthermore, in only a few seemingly innocuous lines, Kleist effectively inverts Schiller's definition of beauty "Natur in der Kunstmäßigkeit," in which the spontaneity of the horse's body—instead of erasing traces of its theatricality—interrupts the script and calls attention to the artificiality of events.

If the horse's deviation from the script were the only the instance of the spontaneous from this anecdote, then Kleist might have to concede to Goethe's theatrical aesthetic, since the horse does disrupt the performance. Yet as was demonstrated in *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* with Ottilie in the tableau vivant, in the wake of the peril of one moment of spontaneity, a second one saves the show: Unzelmann issues a swift, witty, and improvised remark that finds approval of the director. As was recounted in the previous chapter, this same act would have subjected him to disciplinary measures in Goethe's theater. Kleist's anecdote demonstrates an embedded duality within spontaneity—that which can derail a performance and at the same time function as a theatrical device that steps in when the script falters. The spontaneous moments rearrange the roles of the theater, with the consternation of the audience becoming a part of the spectacle and the director becoming a kind of audience, who is at the same time reacting to the events on the stage as well as to the audience. It is a meta-theatrical moment in which Unzelmann embraces contingency, steps out of the script, and comments on the nature of acting practices and spontaneity. In the end, even the director, a surrogate for the anti-improvisational sentiment prevalent in the German theater at that time, is won over by Unzelmann's transformation of a potential stage disaster into a triumph, and is forced to laugh.

This particular anecdote reveals clear sympathies with improvisational acting methods, which over the course of the previous half-century fell out of favor with the trends of the German stage and was even prohibited.[225] It functions as a refutation of the anti-emotionalist actor dating back to Riccoboni, in which truly spontaneous aspects of the body were repressed for being unpredictable, and therefore unreliable for the stage. In this chapter, I argue that Kleist's treatment of the capacities and limitations of the human body participates in the same tradition of corporeal spontaneity and acting as Lessing and Schiller. Much of the discourse of corporeal spontaneity in Lessing and Schiller focuses on mimetically reproducing the appearance of spontaneity on the stage. Kleist, on the other hand, conceives of a mode of corporeal spontaneity that rejects mimesis, and embraces the contingencies and uncertainty of unscripted life. Although Kleist's contribution to this discourse is often not as explicitly theatrically inscribed as in the case of the previous thinkers, the manner in which he considers issues of improvisation and the body exhibits clear affinities with the actor's paradox of intending the unintentional bodily movement. In "Über das Marionettentheater" Kleist formulates the deficiency of intentionality of the body by depicting three moments—the puppet, the beautiful youth, and the bear— in which the faults in self-consciousness manifest not as mental phenomena but rather in a series of corporeal deficiencies. These moments that depict human expectations come face to face with the limitations that their bodies impose upon them and can be interpreted as commentaries on the actor's troubles of actualizing the hidden corporeal potential—serving as a reminder of its

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[225]Gabriele Brandstetter and Edgar Landgraf both in this anecdote call attention to the precarious relationship between improvisation and the law. Brandstetter emphasizes how the act of improvisation is necessarily at odds with prescriptions in that it creates unpredictable actions on the part of individuals and therefore poses problems for regulating behavior. Landgraf highlights contradictions within the confrontation between improvisation and the law––Unzelmann himself hates any sort of "Widerspenstigkeit"— from he claims "reveals improvisation to not be about unbridled spontaneity, freedom, and the utter absence of the rules, but a certain mode of engaging, appropriating, and staging rules." See Brandstetter "Kleists Bewegungsexperimente: Choreographie und Improvisation" *in Kleist: Krise und Experiment. Die Doppelausstellung im Kleist-Jahr 2011* (Berlin: Kerber, 2011) 69; and Landgraf *Improvisation as Art* (New York: Continuum, 2011), 111-115.

precarious and autonomous status. While "Marionettentheater" provides elaborate reflections on the varieties of the actor's paradox, it defers an explicit solution.

The inability of human beings to manipulate their own bodies according to their will is further manifested in Kleist's *Amphitryon*, which depicts the boundless God consciousness from "Marionettentheater." In *Amphitryon* the gods Jupiter and Merkur suffer from none of the human-specific shortcomings and can effortlessly create perfect corporeal imitations. *Amphitryon* satirizes the actor's paradox by demonstrating that only the gods in human form as figurative actors are capable of the perfection to which so many actors aspire. While reinforcing the precarious position human beings occupy in the universe, *Amphitryon* establishes that even perfect beings do not successfully overcome the problems of corporeal imitation and demonstrates instead that those who strive to create perfect imitations will inevitably produce differences.

If *Amphitryon* and "Marionettentheater" accentuate these corporeal deficiencies, and treat spontaneity in the same paradoxical terms as Lessing and Schiller, then Kleist seeks in texts – "Von der Überlegung" and "Über die allmählichen Verfertigungen der Gedanken beim Reden"– to overcome the limitations of the body by providing methods for releasing the body's hidden potential. Although these texts contain few references to the theater or the art of acting, they attempt to provide answers to the same questions as the acting discourse on corporeal spontaneity. His brief essay "Von der Überlegung" criticizes direct corporeal control through intentionality as ineffective and instead privileges the body's ability to independently react to external stimuli without prior thought. While "Über die allmählichen Verfertigungen der Gedanken beim Reden" also exhibits a similar skepticism towards thought before action, Kleist expands the domain of causing spontaneity to include thought and speech. Privileging the

spontaneity of reaction, the act of speaking creates external circumstances for the speaker to react to by initiating others in the process, with the effect of rousing a static thought.

Über das Marionettentheater

Only one month after Kleist had published "Korrespondenz-Nachricht," "Über das Marionettentheater" appeared in four installments in his *Berliner Abendblätter*, a text that like many of Kleist's works was not widely read and laid dormant for about a century.[226] Contemporary scholarship has effectively compensated for this initial lack of interest with a host of literature within the last few decades. The reason why "Marionettentheater" has attracted perhaps the most attention of all his texts is not difficult to see. Its ambiguous form and obscure and paradoxical subject matter, as well as its tendency to problematize not only other paradigms of thought but also itself, have allowed it to consistently evade attempts at definitive categorization and interpretation. The indecipherability "Marionettentheater" has thus prompted a multitude of disparate interpretations ranging from Paul de Man's notable deconstructivist analysis to Gail Hart's gender-oriented reading, and more recently to Ulrich Johannes Beil's view of the text as a kind of nineteenth century cyborg literature and Helmut Müller-Sievers' assertion that "Marionettentheater" functions as a prehistory for nineteenth century kinematic aesthetics.[227]

[226]The notable exception is E.T.A Hoffmann, who—as noted in his letter an Julius Eduard Hitzig—did notice "Marionettentheater" when it was originally published: "Herzlichen Dank für die höchst interressanten Abendblätter – Sehr sticht hervor der Aufsatz über das Marionettentheater – Kleists Erzählungen kenne ich wohl; sie sind seiner würdig." See *E.T.A Hoffmanns Briefwechsel*, *Erster Band Königsberg bis Leipzig*, ed. Friedrich Schnapp (München: Winkler, 1967), 339.

[227]See Paul de Man, "Aesthetic Formalization: Kleist's *Über das Marionettentheater*" in *The Rhetoric of Romanticism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984) 263-290; Gail Hart, "Anmut's Gender: The 'Marionettentheater' and Kleist's revision of 'Anmut und Würde'" in *Women in German Yearbook* Vol. 10 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 83-95; Ulrich Johannes Beil, "'Kenosis' der idealistischen Ästhetik.

As a text whose core revolves around questions of theater, "Marionettentheater" has also caught the attention of some scholars as a potential fertile ground for exploring Kleist's notion of the actor. Alexander Weigel frames "Marionettentheater" within a historical context: Kleist's feud with theater director August Wilhelm Iffland and the Hardenberg censor measures, which in 1809 not only banned the puppet theater and other forms of *Pöbeltheater*, but also at the behest of Iffland, censored all forms of critique of his theater.[228] Weigel then turns to the relationship between puppet and puppeteer in "Marionettentheater" as a metaphor for Kleist's notion of the actor.[229] In a similar fashion, for Alexander Košenina "Marionettentheater" is the key text for uncovering Kleist's notion of the actor. He historicizes Kleist between the two contrasting acting paradigms of his day, Goethe's theater in Weimar and the naturalism of Iffland's *Königliches Theater* in Berlin. Kleist strove to ingratiate himself with both but never found acceptance. Košenina reads "Marionettentheater" as Kleist's attempt to create a space outside both paradigms, claiming that "seine Ideal einer neu beseelten Wahrhaftigkeit, Freiheit und Natürlichkeit beschreibt er im Bild er Marionette."[230] Košenina then proceeds to situate Kleist in a larger historical discourse on the actor, through which he reads "Marionettentheater" in the hopes of understanding its cryptic message. Both Weigel and Košenina position Kleist in a setting in which he was unable to procure the space for himself to establish his own theory of the

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Kleists 'Über das Marionettentheater' als Schiller réécriture" in *Kleist-Jahrbuch* (2006), 75-99; Helmut Müller-Sievers, *The Cylinder: Kinematics in the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012).

[228]For a comprehensive account of the relationship of "Marionettentheater" with the contemporary theater, see Weigel's "Das Imaginäre Heinrich von Kleists. Spiegelungen des Zeitgenössischen Theaters im erzählten Dialog *Über das Marionettentheater*"

[229]See Weigel "Schauspieler als Maschinist. Heinrich von Kleists 'Ueber das Marionettentheater' und das 'Königliche Nationaltheater'" in *Heinrich von Kleist. Studien zu Werk und Wirkung* (Wiesbaden; Westdeutscher Verlag, 1988), 263-80.

[230]Košenina, "Will er 'auf ein Theater warten, welches da kommen soll'? Kleists Ideen zur Schauspielkunst" in *Kleist-Jahrbuch* (2001), 38-54.

actor. Thus they turn to "Marionettentheater" as a solution to Kleist's precarious historical situation, and claim that it functions as a culmination of Kleist's notion of the acting.

Although "Marionettentheater" has become the main source that scholars use for establishing Kleist's views on the actor, there are limitations to readings that view it as a kind of actor's manual. Such readings neglect the general spirit of the text: perpetual human inadequacy. "Marionettentheater" provides no easy redemption for human beings, who are constantly in a state of *in medias res*; they find themselves caught between the superior abilities of non-conscious and semiconscious entities and the divine, and are grimly reminded of their fall from a pre-lapsarian state and the vague and elusive prospect of a restorative order. Rather than a culmination of Kleist's notion of the actor, "Marionettentheater" better serves as a starting point for questions pertaining to the capabilities of actors' bodies, but without the solutions Weigel and Košenina believe it contains. The three episodes of "Marionettentheater"—the puppet, the beautiful youth, and the bear—are a continuation of the discourse on corporeal spontaneity because they routinely demonstrate the limits of intentionality to actualize the full potential of the body.

"Über das Marionettentheater" depicts a first-person narrator's meeting with a first-rate opera dancer, "Herr C." The two become engaged in a discussion on the apparent aesthetic advantages found in puppets. Herr C.'s paradoxical assertion that puppets are capable of appearing more graceful than human beings prompts a conversation for the remainder of the text, in which the two interlocutors exchange ideas and anecdotes. When the narrator confronts Herr C. for his unlikely presence at a lowly puppet theater, the Herr C. responds that any dancer, "der sich ausbilden wolle, mancherlei von ihnen lernen könne" (DKV III, 556). One of the great

ironies of the text is that Herr C. turns to the marionette as a model worthy of imitation when the marionette itself is a representation of a human being.

What astonishes the narrator about the marionettes is the apparent automation of their appendages. Herr C. describes the relationship between puppet and puppeteer in terms that mirrors the actor's paradox of intending the spontaneous.[231] The puppeteer is able exert control without countless threads guiding the movement of the puppet. Direct action, or moving the puppet's every digit and appendage with a corresponding tug of its strings, is the wrong way to achieve grace. A thread for every appendage would be not only impractical, but also plays into the fantasy of boundless and immediate control of a particular aspect of the body by the will. Herr C.'s graceful marionettes instead rely on indirect mechanisms for control. "Jede Bewegung" he claims, "hätte einen Schwerpunkt; es wäre genug, diesen, in dem Innern der Figur, zu regieren; die Glieder, welche nichts als Pendel wären, folgten, ohne irgend ein Zutun, auf eine mechanische Weise von selbst," (DKV III, 556). While the puppeteer's direct control remains limited to the center of the puppet, he is able to utilize the center of gravity of the appendages as pendulums to automate the graceful movement. Instead of metaphysics Kleist invokes physics, the machinist using the *Schwerpunkt* to mediate those movements he cannot directly create.

The reliance on mediation of the body to create a desired movement bears a strong resemblance to Lessing's theory of mediated gestures that requires "eine gewisse Verfassung des Geistes nehmlich, auf welche diese oder jene Veränderung des Körpers von selbst, ohne sein

[231]For Alexander Weigel the relationship between the marionette and its operator (Maschinist) is a metaphor for the relationship between the character and actor. According to Weigel, "Marionettentheater" consists of an implied procedure for coping with the problem of reflection in which the operator relocates himself into the center of gravity of the puppet and establishes an unmediated relationship with it. Weigel draws upon Herr C.'s claim that the operator inserts his soul into the center of gravity of the marionette as a means of creating its graceful movements ("daß sich der Maschinist in den Schwerpunkt der Marionette versetzt," DKV III, 557). This process, which is not a mere identification, but rather a synthesis in which "die Subjektivität des Darstellers (Maschinist) und die Objektivität der dramatischen Figur (Marionette) unterschieden und in ein wechselseitiges Verhältnis gebracht [werden]." See Weigel, "Schauspieler als Maschinist," 279.

Zutun, erfolgt.“[232] Just as with Lessing, the marionette operator cannot directly intend the spontaneous gesture of grace and requires a separate form of autonomy to mediate between consciousness and the aesthetic act.[233] Instead of taking place within a human being as a spontaneous reaction between body and soul, the use of the puppet exteriorizes the role of the body in the form of an inanimate object, which—similar to corporeal spontaneity—exists outside of the domain of the will. The puppeteer, like the actor with his own body, relies on the internal dynamism of his puppet, which can only be manipulated indirectly. Similarly, Schiller's dancer from *Über Anmut und Würde*, who relinquishes control over to mass and gravity, is not much different from the puppet, who operates according to the same principle. In this sense, Kleist's use of puppets as a manifestation of grace functions not so much as a critique of *Anmut und Würde*, but rather as an extension of its logic. Although Schiller would hesitate to accord grace to any non-human entities, on the premises of being graceful both Kleist and Schiller are in agreement: grace is unintentionally intentional—a synthesis of the will and an autonomous corporeal operation outside of the will. The puppet only manifests grace (at least initially) through intentionality: if not for the machinist the grace is not present. Grace emerges in the liminal space between where the human will ends and the autonomy of the puppet begins.

These salient similarities between Lessing, Schiller, and Kleist are not without some substantial differences.[234] While Lessing's actor needs to be highly skilled in imitating gestures

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[232]Lessing, *Werke und Briefe, Bd. 11, Pt. 1*, 250.

[233]Košenina also finds a similarity between "Marionettentheater" and Lessing's notion of the actor, notably the question of whether real emotions are required. He asserts that for Lessing the „Schauspieler ist gleichsam sein eigener Marionettenspieler, der seinen Körper psychologisch höchst reflektiert in naturwahre Bewegungen versetzt, ohne deshalb selbst empfinden zu müssen." See Košenina, "Kleists Ideen zur Schauspielkunst," 52.

[234]Košenina, "Kleists Ideen zur Schauspielkunst" 52. Košenina is subject to the same critique as Weigel, namely that the marionette eventually abstracts the human from the performance and therefore cannot serve as a model for acting. Košenina orients his reading of Kleist in relation to Diderot and Lessing. Košenina looks towards Diderot's "Paradox of the Actor" to assist in conceptualizing the relationship between Kleist's actor and the marionette, since

before he can create the appearance of affects, Kleist's machinist can be an amateur "[…] also dem Maschinisten keine große Kunst kostet, zu verzeichnen," (DKV III, 557). While the puppet externalizes the ideal actor's own relationship with his body, one might even question whether the grace of the marionette idealizes to the extent as to no longer be applicable to human beings. One of the many obscurities of "Marionettentheater" is what exactly the dancer expects to learn from puppets and Herr C.'s interest in marionettes lacks a clear application onto his own art. While at first dismissing the narrator's impression of the process "als etwas ziemlich Geistloses," he concedes that "ihr Tanz gänzlich ins Reich mechanischer Kräfte hinüberspielt, und vermittelst einer Kurbel […] hervorgebracht werden könne," (DKV III, 557). The current model of the marionette is only a transition in Herr C.'s mind, and in a move anticipating Edward Gordon Craig, the full mechanization of the marionettes will eventually eliminate the need for human intervention. Furthermore, Herr C. has clear intentions to build his own marionette that would maximize the abilities of existing ones, and at the same time he appears uninterested in improving his artistry as an actor. This attitude is not surprising—assuming that human beings have maximized their abilities at grace, the next logical step would be to enhance the abilities of the marionette. Herr C. claims that the marionette's advantage over humans are not transferable to them, so that "weder er, noch irgend ein anderer geschickter Tänzer seiner Zeit, Vestris selbst nicht ausgenommen, zu erreichen im Stande wäre" (DKV III, 558). "Marionettentheater" is thus establishing itself as a problematic model for the actor, and Herr C. can only derive from studying the marionettes a reminder of his own corporeal limitations to produce grace. These

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Diderot's work also employs the example of the marionette in order to show that the actor cannot fully identify with his role and must maintain some intentionality.

limitations of the human body force Herr C. to move into the world of the puppet, gesturing to a post-human reality.[235]

The second anecdote featuring the beautiful youth further confirms the shortcomings of the body to produce intended aesthetic phenomena. The narrator recalls an incident of a friend's loss of his "wunderbare Anmut" (DKV, 560), who after noticing a resemblance in the mirror to the famous statue of the boy pulling a thorn from his foot (*Dornauszieher*), vainly tries to recreate this graceful appearance.

> Ich badete mich, erzählte ich, vor etwa drei Jahren, mit einem jungen Mann, über dessen Bildung damals eine wunderbare Anmut verbreitet war. Er mochte ohngefähr in seinem sechszehnten Jahre stehn, und nur ganz von fern ließen sich, von der Gunst der Frauen herbeigerufen, die ersten Spuren von Eitelkeit erblicken. Es traf sich, daß wir grade kurz zuvor in Paris den Jüngling gesehen hatten, der sich einen Splitter aus dem Fuße zieht; der Abguß der Statue ist bekannt und befindet sich in den meisten deutschen Sammlungen. Ein Blick, den er in dem Augenblick, da er den Fuß auf den Schemel setzte, um ihn abzutrocknen, in einen großen Spiegel warf, erinnerte ihn daran; er lächelte und sagte mir, welch eine Entdeckung er gemacht habe. (DKV, 560-61)

The episode of the beautiful youth contains several layers of mimesis. As a cast, the *Dornauszieher* is an imitation of an original statue, which itself is an imitation of the human form. At the same time, the *Dornauszieher* is an inanimate object that serves as a model that the beautiful youth can in turn attempt to imitate. Like the marionette, another inanimate object, the statue contains the aesthetic quality of grace that cannot be reproduced due to its autonomy from the human will. As a model, the *Dornauzieher* also idealizes the human form, which is intensified by the fact that the statue is not present in this scene, but exists only as a memory for both the narrator and the youth. In addition to the statue, the mirror creates a two-dimensional representation of the boy's movements that conveys to him his resemblance to the statue of the *Dornauszieher*. While the mirror does imitate the movements of the body, the original resemblance of the boy to the *Dornauszieher*, which both the narrator and the boy notice, is

[235]For a post-human reading of "Marionettentheater" see Beil, "'Kenosis' der idealistischen Ästhetik," 94-99.

merely incidental and not an imitation. His resemblance reflected in the mirror makes the boy aware that he is graceful and permits him to believe that a recreation is possible, the very belief that "Marionettentheater" persistently undermines. Imbedded is a critique of the kind of thinking found in Schiller and Goethe, in which the ideal actor is capable of attaining the beauty of a statue. The mirror further demonstrates the close relation of the act of recreation and the act of reflection. Imitation by the mirror enables self-reflection, since the subject has a version of himself that he can behold as an object. Yet it is the ease with which the mirror reproduces an appearance that perhaps gives the boy false hopes that his body is indeed capable of recreating this graceful moment. The mirror instantiates both literal and figurative forms of reflection, in which the moment of self-consciousness actualizes and at the same time results in a corresponding corporeal deficiency. The mirror, rather than aiding the boy in his attempt at recreation, merely reminds him of his failed attempts.

> In der Tat hatte ich, in eben diesem Augenblick, dieselbe gemacht; doch sei es, um die Sicherheit der Grazie, die ihm beiwohnte, zu prüfen, sei es, um seiner Eitelkeit ein wenig heilsam zu begegnen: ich lachte und erwiderte – er sähe wohl Geister! Er errötete, und hob den Fuß zum zweitenmal, um es mir zu zeigen; doch der Versuch, wie sich leicht hätte voraussehen lassen, mißglückte. Er hob verwirrt den Fuß zum dritten und vierten, er hob ihn wohl noch zehnmal: umsonst er war außerstande dieselbe Bewegung wieder hervorzubringen – was sag ich? die Bewegungen, die er machte, hatten ein so komisches Element, daß ich Mühe hatte, das Gelächter zurückzuhalten: – (DKV, 561).

This example illustrates an unremitting problem that actors face when attempting to intentionally produce the appearance of spontaneity.[236] Since the narrator pretends he did not notice the boy's resemblance to the *Dornauszieher*, he forces the youth the recreate the movement. Yet what exactly is the nature of this movement? Although the boy intended placing his foot on the stool, he does not intend its resemblance to the *Dornauszieher*, rather it was merely a spontaneous

[236]Christopher Wild considers the beautiful youth in relation to the theater as a parody of the Weimar Classic aesthetic. "Kleists Text dekuvriert somit das klassische Bildungsprogramm nicht von außen, sondern treibt dessen innere Widersprüche heraus, wenn er die allzu exakte Nachbildung des Ideals zur einer Reinszenierung des Sündenfalls stilisiert." Wild, 126.

similarity. His attempts to recreate the foot movement are both an imitation of his original movement and to produce a resemblance to the statue. Yet the resulting recreation fruitlessly repeats the same failed gestures in order to recover the lost movement and results in only flawed copies. By setting up two opposing states of the body, a graceful one and alienated one, this episode instantiates the actor's paradox: a body whose potential cannot be actualized through intentionality. His senseless repetitions reenact the concerns of the anti-emotionalist viewpoint, which notes that real affects in the theater, which usually require being able to repeat the high quality of a performance night after night, are ultimately unsustainable. The result is a further state of alienation, in which the limits of the body are made conscious and contrasted with its inaccessible capacity.

While the plight of the beautiful youth represents a tragic moment in which the only gain he makes through reflection is the knowledge of the loss of the graceful state of his body, its theatrical value isn't tragic, but rather comedic. With the beautiful youth Kleist satirizes the tragic aspirations of self-reflexive corporeal control in which no successful imitation is produced—only laughter. The youth's humorous failure at performing evokes the moment of Schiller's failed actor from "Über das gegenwärtige teusche Theater." As a contrary example to the diminished consciousness of the sleepwalker, who is able to maintain stage presence by forgetting the audience, Schiller's failed actor also stumbles in a moment of consciousness that not only provokes the cackling of the audience, but also features that same actor's loss of grace.[237] Further parallels with Schiller are found in *Anmut und Würde*. Although

[237]Beil also finds points of comparison between "Marionettentheater" and "Über das gegenwärtige teutsche Theater," viewing Schiller's passages concerning marionettes as providing another alternative to the failed state of contemporary German dramaturgy. See Beil, "'Kenosis' der idealistischen Ästhetik," 92-94.

“Marionettentheater” is usually interpreted as being ad odds with Schiller’s *Anmut und Würde*,[238] the beautiful youth confirms one of its most basic premises: the anti-theatricality of grace. As previously discussed, grace is anti-theatrical because it gives no credence to its act as a performance and creates a state of absorption that fails to acknowledge the audience.[239] In this way grace has a quality, similar to affect, in that it resists any attempt to be employed intentionally. The example of the Kleist’s beautiful youth is a kind of Schillerian fantasy of the actor, what he wishes would happen to actors who attempt to portray grace on the stage.

By the time the narrative reaches the final anecdote in “Marionettentheater,” the issue of grace has receded into the background.[240] Herr C. recalls an experience at the estate of a Livonian noble, where the acclaimed dancer reveals another of his athletic talents: fencing. After defeating the noble’s eldest son, his prowess is tested by a more formidable opponent: a captive bear. Herr C. is unable to overcome the bear, despite his use of feints to trick it. He attributes his loss to the bear’s ability to know his intention: “als ob er meine Seele darin lesen könnte” (DKV, 562).

Although this example appears much further removed from concerns of actors’ bodies compared to the other examples, this bizarre encounter contains several elements that warrant a theatrical reading. The peculiarity of the incident has few precedents for comparison, with the exception of Roman gladiatorial combat, where animals were brought in for the purpose of sport.

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[238]See Hart, “Anmut’s Gender” and Beil, “‘Kenosis’ der idealistischen Ästhetik.”

[239]Wild also invokes Fried’s thesis in his discussion of “Marionettentheater,” highlighting how the state of absorption resembles the non-consciousness of a pre-lapsarian state. See Wild, “Wider die Marionettentheaterfeindlichkeit,” 128-129.

[240]The attempt to reconcile the example of the bear’s radical dissimilarity to the other examples in “Marionettentheater” is a routine object of scholarship. Perhaps most prominent is whether the bear or the fencer are graceful, which is not obvious. For instance, Beil claims the bear is graceful, which he bases on a supplementary definition he cites in *Über naïve und sentimentalische Dichtung*. Even if we contend that Kleist’s bear fits Schiller’s description, it is nevertheless the case that grace lacks the dominant presence found in the discussions of the *Dornauszieher* und the marionette. If the episode of the bear does to some extent illustrate grace, it is only as an afterthought. See Beil, 88; Wild, 133. Knab, 28-34.

Although theater criticism has usually been quick to distance itself from other kinds of spectatorship, it is worth considering that in the Roman context of spectatorship the distinction between theater and spectator sports was a fine one.[241] The spectatorship takes place on two levels: bear and dancer are both performing for Herr v. G. (and ostensibly his sons), who interjects during the fighting with provocative remarks, while at the same time the dancer is also performing for the bear. Herr C.'s encounter with the bear culminates with the following scene:

> Jetzt war ich fast in dem Fall des jungen Herrn v. G... Der Ernst des Bären kam hinzu, mir die Fassung zu rauben, Stöße und Finten wechselten sich, mir triefte der Schweiß: umsonst! Nicht bloß, daß der Bär, wie der erste Fechter der Welt, alle meine Stöße parierte; auf Finten (was ihm kein Fechter der Welt nachmacht) ging er gar nicht einmal ein: Aug in Auge, als ob er meine Seele darin lesen könnte, stand er, die Tatze schlagfertig erhoben, und wenn meine Stöße nicht ernsthaft gemeint waren, so rührte er sich nicht (DKV III, 562)

While in the first example the dancer's abilities are critically viewed in relationship to the marionette's ability to appear graceful, and in the second example the same relationship is established between the unreflective boy appearing as the *Dornauszieher* to his later reflective self, Herr C. isn't trying to imitate the bear. While they are both engaged in a struggle, the factors for the evaluation of each participant are quite different: the human being's ability to create deceptive signs and the bear's ability to read them. In fact the relationship is largely one-sided, with an active fencer and a passive bear who never fights back but only parries the threatening thrusts. The lack of a common basis for evaluating the two necessarily leads to allotting each a different role in their relationship. If Herr C. is reprising his role as a performer, then the bear, as a semi-passive recipient would correspond to the role of the audience.[242]

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[241]David Wiles "The Theatre in Roman and Christian Europe" in *The Oxford Illustrated History of Theatre* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995) 66.

[242]Christopher Wild views the encounter with the bear as an "Allegorie des Theaters." For Wild the bear performs both as audience member and actor, with the "Holzstall" as analogous to the original theater from the first example, that was "auf dem Markt zusammengezimmert." His emphasis lies on the bear and its double function as both an

As a representation of the "audience" aspect of the theatrical analogy the bear's advantage over Herr C. is not his strength or size, but rather his semiotic proficiency. Whenever Herr C. uses a feint to deceive the bear into a parrying move, which would leave the bear open to attack, the bear doesn't respond. Since he can always tell the difference between the real and fake plunges of the rapier, the bear's reaction to the attacks thwarts the intention of a feint. A feint must appear virtually identical to a real thrust in order to be effective; it must reproduce the appearance of a real thrust, without actually becoming one.

Herr C. notably doesn't ascribe the ineffectiveness of his feints to the bear's abilities to read the signs of the body. In fact, the bear bypasses the body altogether and behaves as if he could read Herr C.'s soul. Through his own insight into Herr C.'s intentions, the bear prevents the possibility of dissimulation. This point is made all the more compelling by the theatrical language used to describe the bear, according to which *rühren* has a double meaning. The bear literally doesn't *budge* or *stir* with the feint, but when seen in the context of the theater in which *rühren* describes an affected audience, he isn't *moved* by a gesture that falls short of being genuine. This situates the encounter with the bear in the discourse of the natural acting paradigm, in which corporeal signs that more closely resemble the kind of realism they strive for are favored for their ability to better produce an affective audience. The bear reacts contrary to all expectations by recognizing the deceptive sign that is superficially identical to a real one. By doing so the bear represents the worst possible audience according to the natural acting paradigm, in which the best possible imitation produces virtually no results.

In each example there is a clear instance of corporeal failure where the recreation always falls short of an unobtainable model. In terms of the actor, Kleist presents no discernable model

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audience and actor, in which the bear's "looking back" violates the fourth wall of the theater. See Wild, "Wider die Marionettenfeindlichkeit: Kleists Kritik der bürgerlicher Antitheatralität," in Kleist-Jahrbuch (2002), 133-34.

for him to follow, only a series of failures whereby the path to imitation is routinely blocked. Not only is Herr C. one of the best dancers, and as an opera singer he probably has an incredible voice, but he is also a top fencer. To present a master of corporeal control twice as a failure gives little hope for the rest of humanity. The only solutions Kleist does provide are non-conscious entities such as marionettes, or, very briefly in the final lines of the text, the infinite-consciousness of the god. Instead of recommendations or methods for a prospective actor, "Marionettentheater" negatively defines his notion of the actor by showing how he shouldn't act.

Although "Marionettentheater" more effectively demonstrates corporeal deficiencies as opposed to outlining acting methods, there are times it gestures to a possible solution in improvisation. Prussia under von Hardenberg banned the puppet theater in 1809 precisely because of its association with improvisation. The puppet theater rarely had a set script, a fact that troubled the censors for almost the same reason it vexed Goethe: it is an exercise of autonomy that is difficult to control. Yet unlike Goethe, the censors were less interested in subtracting from artistic integrity and deeply concerned with the political consequences of having elements in society that resist censorship. Without a script, the puppet theater could thumb its nose at authorities with scathing political critiques, an issue all the more pressing after Napoleon's supremacy in Prussia after 1806. In this sense the fleeting nature of acting provided its greatest advantage. Without a script the only evidence of malfeasance exists in the memory of the audience.

Amphitryon

"Über das Marionettentheater" ends by invoking the precarious situation of human beings, possessing neither the benefits of non-consciousness of a marionette nor the infinite

consciousness of a god. This marks the first reference to an omnipotent being in Kleist's essay, with the vast majority of his consideration being given to lower levels of consciousness. Despite only briefly alluding to the power of the divine realm, Kleist explores the limitless capacities of gods in his comedy *Amphitryon*. *Amphitryon* elaborates on the problem of corporeal representation in "Marionettentheater" by depicting gods as actor figures, who exert absolute control over their bodies.[243]

The first instance of acting in *Amphitryon,* however*,* isn't a god assuming human form, but comes rather from Amphitryon's inept and cowardly servant Sosias. Although the subplot with Sosias isn't specifically about his own lack of corporeal control, the thematization of his role in the plot in terms of acting set the stage for examining the gods in terms of acting. The drama opens with Sosias on the road to Thebes, where he is to proclaim his master's victory over the Athenians. Lacking self-confidence, Sosias decides to rehearse his upcoming role of announcing the victory to the queen, Alkmene.

> Doch wär es gut, wenn du die Rolle übtest?
> Gut! Gut bemerkt, Sosias! Prüfe dich.
> Hier soll der Audienzsaal sein, und diese
> Latern Alkmene, die mich auf dem Throne erwartet.
>
> (*Er setzt die Laterne auf den Boden*.)
>
> Durchlauchtigste! Mich schickt Amphitryon,
> Mein hoher Herr und Euer edler Gatte,
> Von seinem Siege über die Athener
> Die frohe Zeitung Euch zu überbringen.
> - Ein guter Anfang! – "Ach, wahrhaftig, liebster
> Sosias, meine Freude mäßg' ich nicht,
> Da ich dich wiedersehe." – Diese Güte
> Vortreffliche, beschämt mich, wenn sie stolz gleich

[243]Scholars have remarked on *Amphitryon*'s link with the theater and acting discourse. Gabriele Brandstetter views *Amphitryon* as a play that utilizes the theatrically construed mirror image to explore the problem of differentiation and identity. Yixu Lü runs through instances of theatricality in the drama. See Brandstetter "Duell im Spiegel. Zum Rahmenspiel in Kleists 'Amphitryon'" in Kleist-Jahrbuch (1999), 109-127; Lü *Die Theatralität des Göttlichen: Über Kleists Amphitryon* in Kleist-Jahrbuch (2001), 148-59.

Gewiß jedweden andern machen würde.
- Sieh! Das ist auch nicht übel! – (DKV I, 384)

Sosias leaves nothing to uncertainty in a potentially momentous encounter with his queen and creates an improvised theater in which he can practice his imagined encounter.[244] Sosias' solitary dress rehearsal requires that he split his subjectivity into three aspects and thus features himself starring in three roles: his projected ideal self who makes the announcement; his audience—Alkmene—represented by the lantern, whose voice he imitates; and his critical self, who provides reassuring commentary on his performance.[245] While the division of his subjectivity into a critical self and an audience provides the opportunity for self-reflection, its role in this mock performance is to merely boost his confidence. There is no real threat of rejection or failure here and Sosias' rehearsal is nothing more than a fantasy, a theatrical representation of his ideal self.

Sosias's fantasy never actualizes, since the god Merkur appropriates his appearance and beats him into submission. Merkur is a great actor in every way that Sosias is a poor one. Where Sosias imagines having trouble even playing himself, Merkur becomes Sosias with an ease that would astonish even the most accomplished actor. Merkur is an identical copy of Sosias in two regards: he has not only perfectly mimicked Sosias' appearance—the slow-witted Sosias notices their uncanny resemblance rather late in his conversation with Merkur—but he also contains all of his memories. Sosias even tests the limits of Merkur's knowledge, only to discover that he knows everything Sosias knows, including cherished state secrets. Once Merkur convinces Sosias through violence and empirical evidence that he is the real Sosias, Merkur discharges him

[244]Sosias' preparation as a kind of dress rehearsal has received the attention of scholarship. Most recently, Brandstetter views it as an "improvisiertes Stegreifspiel" in which he plays three roles. My analysis primarily builds on her observations. See Brandstetter "Duell im Spiegel,“ 117-120. See also Volker Nölle "Verspielte Identität. Eine expositorische ‚Theaterprobe' in Kleists Lustspiel" in Kleist-Jahrbuch (1993), 160-180.

[245]Sosias had additionally been rehearsing for the rehearsal during the moments of the opening monologue in which he converses with himself, referring to himself in both the first and third person.

of his old role and assigns him a new one, assuming both the figure of the actor and director. Sosias' own encounter with his mirror image only serves to remind him of his cowardice. In a comedic reversal of expectations, his mirror image deprives him of his identity instead of affirming it in a moment of self-consciousness. While Merkur has derailed Sosias' original plan of a laudable proclamation before Alkmene, Sosias' rehearsal was not in vain. The same split of subjectivity is required of him to become someone other than himself.

After Merkur successfully enters Thebes posing as Sosias, Sosias can more effectively abstract himself from his own identity, and his search for critical self-reflection becomes easier. He becomes just Sosias the critic, as when his wife, Charis, begins to notice behavioral differences between Merkur's portrayal of Sosias and the original Sosias.

> **Charis** Und da ich jetzt mich neiderbeuge, liebend,
> Zu einem Kusse, wendest du, Halunke,
> Der Wand dich zu, ich soll dich schlafen lassen.
> **Sosias** Brav, alter, ehrlicher Sosias!
> **Charis** Was?
> Ich glaube gar du lobst dich noch? Du lobst dich? (DKV I, 418)

This situation provides a stark counter example to Sosias' first performance. There, Sosias lacked the critical perspective of an outsider, leaving Sosias' critical self to praise his performing self. In this second performance, he is reduced to the status of a critic, with no claim to the praise he gives himself. Yet this comical situation provides Sosias with the opportunity for self-reflection. Sosias' ideal self, the role that he attempts to practice for, is only actualized in Merkur. Sosias would only praise Merkur's performance if it revealed a lack on his part. Sosias, who is portrayed as inept and lacking in self-confidence, finally sees a self that does the opposite, who isn't beholden to his nagging wife.

Every conceivable explanation is given for the discrepancy in the behavior of Amphitryon and Sosias. Once deception becomes indistinguishable from reality, the

inconsistencies are explained as a fault of subjective experience. Amphitryon rejects Sosias' explanation for encountering himself on the way to Thebes as "dies Irrgeschwätz? Der Wischwasch?/ Ists Träumerei? Ist es Betrunkenheit?/ Gehirnverrückung? Oder soll ein Scherz sein?" (DKV I, 405). When Amphitryon finds Alkmene describing an encounter with him the evening before of which he has no memory, he dismisses her tale as a dream. Alkmene counters his accusation with a Cartesian one of her own "hat dir ein böser Dämon das Gedächtnis/ Geraubt, Amphitryon?" (DKV I, 411).

The distinguishing feature of the gods in *Amphitryon* is the absolute mastery they have over their bodies. As perfect beings the gods Jupiter and Merkur have no concern for obstacles to corporeal dissimulation and can transform their bodies as they see fit. The gods' corporeal control goes well beyond immunity to the anxieties imposed by control of affect and grace.[246] Their bodies exist for them completely at the disposal of their intentionality, to the extent that there is nothing in their form that is autonomous. Such precise corporeal control is the natural actor's highest aspiration, and stands in contrast to the clear examples in "Marionettentheater" of limitations on human beings to control their bodies. If the gods were marionettes, they would be the variety with countless threads to direct control over every potentiality of the body.

Despite the gods' ability to assume human form and to appear as a precise mimetic representation of another character, differences do emerge between them and the beings they are imitating. As mentioned earlier, Charis notices key behavioral differences between Sosias and Merkur posing as Sosias, which leads Sosias to praise the behavior of his double. For Sosias,

[246]Lü reads Merkur's ability to create the appearance of affects without actually himself being affected as related to Diderot's support for the anti-emotionalist actor. Likewise Jupiter is an emotionalist actor since he is directly invested in the affairs of humans. The question of emotional investment in a role, however, only has significance in the context of corporeal spontaneity—a particularly human concern—since both of these were methods to create the a appearance true to nature. The gods don't embody these modes of acting, since they as divine beings maintain complete and direct corporeal control, and any emotional commitment is tangential to their status as figurative actors. See Lü *Die Theatralität des Göttlichen: Über Kleists Amphitryon* in Kleist-Jahrbuch (2001), 155-56.

Merkur represents the idealized self to which he aspired during his theatrical performance. Sosias later remarks on the prowess of his doppelgänger that "Das Ich, das mich von hier verjagte, / stand im Vorteil gegen mich; es hatte Mut / Und zwei geübte Arme, wie ein Fechter," (DKV 415). While Merkur allegedly appears identical to Sosias, Sosias is able to distinguish Merkur from himself by his corporeal improvements: two well trained arms. The reference to fencing conjures up Herr C., the defeated opponent of the fencing bear from "Marionettentheater." Yet unlike in the case of the bear, the gods' ability to feign an appearance is vastly superior to the feints of Herr C.

Alkmene notices as well a difference between two versions of her husband Amphitryon. In a conversation with Charis she maintains

> Du müsstest denn die Regung mir missdeuten,
> Dass ich ihn schöner niemals fand, als heut.
> Ich hätte für sein Bild ihn halten können,
> Für sein Gemälde, sieh, von Künstlerhand,
> Dem Leben treu, ins Göttliche verzeichnet.
> Er stand, ich weiß nicht, von mir, wie im Traum,
> Und ein unsägliches Gefühl ergriff
> Mich meines Glücks, wie ich es nie empfunden,
> Als er mir strahlend, wie in Glorie, gestern
> Der hohe Sieger von Pharissa nahte. (DKV I, 422)

Jupiter and Merkur's portrayal of Amphitryon and Sosias is both mimetically perfect and at the same time leaves behind intangible inconsistencies that in turn drive the plot and enable its comedic elements. These inconsistencies are not just limited to the nature of doubling, in which Amphitryon is supposedly in two places at the same time, but also include subtle differences between how others account for their experiences with Amphitryon and Sosias. Although critical for the plot, the inconsistencies are not just present out of necessity, but rather because they derive from the relationship between the divine beings and their inhabited corporeal form. Jupiter and Merkur are capable of perfect imitation because they are perfect beings. *Amphitryon*

demonstrates the issues that emerge when a perfect being attempts to represent an imperfect one. It is generally agreed that the differences are improvements, resulting in idealized versions of Amphitryon and Sosias. As effective and believable as Jupiter's imitation of Amphitryon is, it is actually too perfect and Jupiter and Merkur improve on the nature of Amphitryon and Sosias by sanitizing their imperfections. On the other side of the spectrum is *Miss Sara Sampson's* Marwood, whose inability to always keep her emotional states under control reveals her true nature. The gods, however, face the opposite problem: their own omnipotence stands in the way of perfect imitation. To exist in a pure mimetic relationship with an original would subordinate the position of the copier to the copied, something that is at odds with the nature of the gods.

Amphitryon thus demonstrates the limits of mimetic representation and gestures to an alternative to strict corporeal mimesis. Jupiter and Merkur have a notion of corporeal representation that favors idealized representations over slavish ones. As much as the gods are capable of the perfect mimetic representation, they cannot reconcile their own perfection with the imperfection of the imitated. The result is a mimesis with a difference, the difference accounting for their own perfection and removing the imperfections of the imitated.

Von der Überlegung

The preceding texts satirize the value of slavish corporeal imitation, the kind towards which the natural acting paradigm aspires, by routinely demonstrating its ineffectualness and general futility. In the act of critique, however, these texts offer little in terms of a substantial alternative. The solution presented by "Marionettentheater" to eat from the Tree of Knowledge once again, circumnavigating the world to discover the backdoor to the Garden of Eden, "um in den Stand der Unschuld zurückzufallen" (DKV III, 563), would serve only to frustrate actors by

highlighting the elusiveness of their goals. The other solution, alluded to in "Marionettentheater" and instantiated in *Amphitryon*, portrays gods as actors in an attempt to overcome the problem of imitation, only to reveal other issues that emerge out of their perfection.

But Kleist's work does not merely suggest rejecting the capacities of the body to create perfect imitations. Two of Kleist's texts, "Von der Überlegung" and "Über die allmählichen Verfertigungen der Gedanken beim Reden," dispense with attempts at imitation and instead explore ways to release the spontaneous potential of the body through unpremeditated and effective reactions. Although these texts contain few explicit references to the theater found in "Marionettentheater," they are worthy of consideration because they employ the same theme of overcoming the limitations of the body by resorting to spontaneity.[247] At the same time these two texts reveal an intriguing synthesis of Lessing, Schiller, and Goethe. Despite his opposition to Goethe, Kleist is still taking part in the same shift from classic to Romantic aesthetics, by rejecting mimesis as a founding principal of art. Yet at the same time, he embraces the corporeal spontaneity of Lessing and the early Schiller while dispensing with their mimetic aspirations. Kleist valorizes in these texts a non-mimetic corporeal spontaneity, in which the body's ability to merely react to external stimuli achieves elusive mental and physical tasks.

"Von der Überlegung" appeared in the *Berliner Abendblätter* only a few days before "Marionettentheater" in December 1810. Since it scarcely takes up a page, it can be quoted in its entirety.

> Man rühmt den Nutzen der Überlegung in alle Himmel; besonders der kaltblütigen und langwierigen, vor der Tat. Wenn ich ein Spanier, ein Italiener oder ein Franzose wäre: so möchte es damit sein Bewenden haben. Da ich aber ein Deutscher bin, so denke ich

[247]Weigel confirms the importance of reading these texts together when he notices the similarities between "Von der Überlegung," "AV," and "Marionettentheater." He claims that the relationship between marionette and actor, in which neither is fully in control and both exist in a reciprocal relationship, mirrors the process between thinking and acting in the other two texts. See Weigel, "Der Schauspieler als Maschinist," 279.

> meinem Sohn einst, besonders wenn er sich zum Soldaten bestimmen sollte, folgende Rede zu halten.
>
> »Die Überlegung, wisse, findet ihren Zeitpunkt weit schicklicher *nach*, als *vor* der Tat. Wenn sie vorher, oder in dem Augenblick der Entscheidung selbst, ins Spiel tritt: so scheint sie nur die zum Handeln nötige Kraft, die aus dem herrlichen Gefühl quillt, zu verwirren, zu hemmen und zu unterdrücken; dagegen sich nachher, wenn die Handlung abgetan ist, der Gebrauch von ihr machen läßt, zu welchem sie dem Menschen eigentlich gegeben ist, nämlich sich dessen, was in dem Verfahren fehlerhaft und gebrechlich war, bewußt zu werden, und das Gefühl für andere künftige Fälle zu regulieren. Das Leben selbst ist ein Kampf mit dem Schicksal; und es verhält sich auch mit dem Handeln wie mit dem Ringen. Der Athlet kann, in dem Augenblick, da er seinen Gegner umfaßt hält, schlechthin nach keiner anderen Rücksicht, als nach bloßen augenblicklichen Eingebungen verfahren; und derjenige, der berechnen wollte, welche Muskeln er anstrengen, und welche Glieder er in Bewegung setzen soll, um zu überwinden, würde unfehlbar den kürzeren ziehen, und unterliegen. Aber nachher, wenn er gesiegt hat oder am Boden liegt, mag es zweckmäßig und an seinem Ort sein, zu überlegen, durch welchen Druck er seinen Gegner niederwarf, oder welch ein Bein er ihm hätte stellen sollen, um sich aufrecht zu erhalten. Wer das Leben nicht, wie ein solcher Ringer, umfaßt hält, und tausendgliedrig, nach allen Windungen des Kampfs, nach allen Widerständen, Drücken, Ausweichungen und Reaktionen, empfindet und spürt: der wird, was er will, in keinem Gespräch, durchsetzen; viel weniger in einer Schlacht.« (DKV III, 554-555)

Spurning the convention that privileges thinking before acting, this text issues a counterproposal, suggesting that "Überlegung" or deliberation is more appropriate after the act. Instead of preparing one for the act, deliberation inevitably leads to second-guessing that impedes the very act for which it is supposed to prepare. In addition, deliberation should follow the act not only because it would inhibit action if it preceded it, but also because it is more effective afterwards by properly accounting for mistakes done in the act. Reflection holds more benefit as a tool for learning about the past than as a predictor of future events.

Although "Von der Überlegung" frames itself explicitly as a paradox (with the subtitle "Eine Paradoxe") on the basis of its counterintuitive suggestion, the essay begins with a centuries-old cliché about various European nationalities. Just as it might be good advice to recommend the virtues of prudence and foresight to hot-blooded Southern Europeans—the French, Spanish, and Italians—the excessively provident Germans need to consider the

advantages of impulsiveness. Formulated in the nationalist rhetoric often associated with Kleist in the last years of his life, “Von der Überlegung” could not be more different that “Marionettentheater.” “Marionettentheater” depicts a cosmopolitan worldview, in which the main players are exposed to various European cultures (French, German, Livonian) and borders between nations are mere lines on a map. With its multinational underpinnings it at the same time makes universal claims, since any local difference is ultimately subordinated to the general and necessary failings of humanity as a whole. From the multiple replicas of the *Dornauszieher* found in art collections throughout Europe, to the changes in setting that all ultimately illustrate the same human failing, the universalism in “Marionettentheater” privileges the differences between human beings, puppets, and gods, rather than the differences among human beings. “Von der Überlegung,” however, represents a world defined by national differences. These national differences are viewed on the basis of deficiencies, with southern Europeans being too rash and Germans too cautious. Yet unlike “Marionettentheater” these deficiencies are contingent as opposed to necessary and can be altered by nationally specific advice.

As much as these two texts are at odds with one another, they both ultimately address the relationship between the body and intentionality. For a text that is ostensibly about the merits of deliberation, “Von der Überlegung” conceives itself almost exclusively in terms of its corporeal advantages. Deferring reflection, for instance, focuses on the need for spontaneous corporeal reactions in critical situations of athletic competitions such as wrestling. Deliberation in this case does not inhibit action through second-guessing, but rather renders it entirely impractical. By describing the ridiculous situation in which an athlete scrutinizes every move of his body before he acts, Kleist undermines conventional wisdom by demonstrating that the body’s mere ability to react is sufficient for successful action. “Marionettentheater” assumes corporeal control, only to

repeatedly challenge the belief that the body can execute commands of the will, resulting in a pessimistic worldview of human capabilities. "Von der Überlegung" reverses the order, beginning with the assumption of bodily weakness without deliberation, and demonstrates how forsaking deliberation is ultimately a great advantage.

By relinquishing what was before the domain of deliberation over to the automatic aspects of the body, "Von der Überlegung" formulates solutions to the insurmountable problems in "Marionettentheater." Impulsive action is an avenue available to human beings to return to the corporeal advantages possessed before they became self-conscious, effectively a momentary restoration of the pre-lapsarian order by forsaking the deliberation with which humans control their bodies. In a striking correlation to the beautiful youth of "Marionettentheater," consciousness creates an insurmountable obstacle to graceful gestures because reflection impedes bodily movements. By marginalizing the use of the will to directly control the body and instead relying on the body's capacity to react autonomously, Kleist is intervening in "Von der Überlegung" in the discourse of corporeal spontaneity. In contrast to Lessing and Schiller, who were primarily interested in appropriating the appearance of corporeal spontaneity without the loss of control that accompanies it, Kleist is proposing a true corporeal spontaneity. It is a potentially alarming moment when an individual realizes he is unaware of how his body might react to outside stimuli, but Kleist demonstrates that this uncertainty that accompanies forgoing deliberation has its advantages. Possessing no models on which to base a conclusion enables a successful corporeal encounter.

In contrast to Lessing and Schiller, Kleist's discussion is not inscribed as explicitly theatrical. His primary aims in the text are various forms of combat, whether as sport or war. Yet the extent to which his notions of corporeal spontaneity overlap with acting discourse and

provide solutions to problems formulated as explicitly theatrical in "Marionettentheater" allow "Von der Überlegung" to be read as a contribution to the art of the actor, albeit one whose ultimate significance is not restricted to it.[248] Questions of athleticism and acting often coincide. In the character of Herr C., the bear-fencing opera dancer, the figure of the athlete and the actor become virtually indistinguishable, in that Kleist conceives of both figures in terms of their corporeal deficiencies. In addition, the dancer is pitted against the bear in an athletic encounter not unlike a wrestling match, which at the same time has been demonstrated to be a theatrical space. Once again, it is not skill or strength that is privileged with the body, but rather the body's relationship to deliberate action. To position acting before thinking creates actions that don't imitate anything; each movement defers expectations in favor of the unknown, in this case the spontaneity of the body.[249]

Kleist ends with the prospect of being doubly defeated in both *battle* and *conversation* ("Schlacht" and "Gespräch") if deliberation is constantly maintained. While inspiring soldiers to fight is consistent with the text's nationalist introduction, his use of conversation appears without prior reference in "Von der Überlegung." How can a text that attempts to valorize the enhanced capacities that spontaneity plays in the human body also insist on its uses for conversation, an act that requires an intentional act? For this we shall turn to "Über die allmähliche Verfertigung der Gedanken beim Reden."

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[248]Whereas the beautiful youth and the dancer of "Marionettentheater" are deeply concerned with the kind of signs their bodies exhibit, in "Von der Überlegung" signs do not figure into the equation.

[249]One possible objection to this reading is that by positioning reflection after the act, it still works to prepare for future acts, so in a sense Kleist's reflection is taking place before the act.

Über die allmähliche Verfertigung der Gedanken beim Reden

Kleist's 1805 essay "Über die allmähliche Verfertigung der Gedanken beim Reden" opens with an unassuming recommendation: "Wenn du etwas wissen willst und es durch Meditation nicht finden kannst, so rate ich dir, mein lieber, sinnreicher Freund, mit dem nächsten Bekannten, der dir aufstößt, darüber zu sprechen" (DKV I, 534). Urging someone to engage in a discussion with others and elicit both expertise and advice in a moment of need, however, does not constitute a remarkable subject for an essay, nor was this Kleist's intention. Instead of speaking as a participant in a dialogue for the exchange of ideas between two or more interlocutors, Kleist proposes instead that the act of speaking functions as a catalyst for the thought process. According to Kleist the spontaneity of the speech act—to speak without prior thought—produces the kinds of results that exceed the capabilities of deliberation: "was ich durch ein vielleicht stundenlanges Brüten nicht herausgebracht haben würde," (DKV I, 535). Kleist justifies speaking before prior thought with the following:

> Ich glaube, daß mancher großer Redner, in dem Augenblick, da er den Mund aufmachte, noch nicht wußte, was er sagen würde. Aber die Überzeugung, daß er die ihm nötige Gedankenfülle schon aus den Umständen, und der daraus resultierenden Erregung seines Gemüts schöpfen würde, machte ihn dreist genug, den Anfang, auf gutes Glück hin, zu setzen. (DKV III, 536)

Kleist is demythologizing the figure of the great orator here by claiming there was likely little forethought and preparation that went into his speeches. Yet at the same time he proposes that the spontaneity of speech is a rhetorical technique to facilitate thought, which requires the explicit rejection of adhering to a plan. The paradoxical suggestion of situating the act of speech before thinking and reflection in "Allmähliche Verfertigung" is a reiteration of a similar *ordo inversus* found in "Von der Überlegung." Kleist dismisses in both texts the conventional wisdom that privileges careful deliberation before acting and instead favors the spontaneity of the act,

whether by speaking or through corporeal reactions. In this sense, both texts are mitigating the consequences of the particularly human dilemma from “Marionettentheater”: By relying on spontaneity, these texts dispense with detrimental effects that emerge out of reflection and self-consciousness.[250]

At the core of Kleist’s essay is the question of how to produce an idea that can be transformed into successful speech. Formulating the appropriate idea appears just as spontaneous—and therefore elusive—as the body’s relationship with affect. As an instance of induced spontaneity Kleist’s method for speech and thought begins with many of the same assumptions from the discourse of corporeal spontaneity: the existence of a hidden potential in human beings that resists direct intentionality; this hidden potential is a desirable characteristic in certain situations, particularly ones requiring a degree of performativity; its inability to be deployed at a particular time can frequently lead to disaster, which leads to questions of how to willfully actualize this potential. Yet there is one significant difference: the spontaneity of the body is not the goal, since Kleist is above all proposing engendering thoughts through speech acts. Rather the body mediates the transformation of thought into language in the speech act. Speaking exteriorizes thought, forgoing reliance on the mental sphere (“und es durch Meditation nicht finden kannst”) and furnishing it with a materiality or more specifically a corporeal presence. It is thus no coincidence that Kleist employs a corporeal metaphor to discuss the relationship between ideas and speaking. In one of the many French references in the text, Kleist reinvents the maxim *l’appétit vient en mangeant* (the appetite comes with eating) as *l’idée vient en parlant* (the idea comes with speaking). Having an appetite, effectively an affect by the

[250]Brandstetter draws parallels between “Allmähliche Verfertigung” and “Marionettentheater,” emphasizing the similarities between failed speech and bodily movement. See “Kleists Bewegungsexperimente,“ 63.

standards of the time, appears incapable of being intended, yet the corporeal act of eating can in fact induce this. In the same way an idea can be caused by another act of the body: speaking.

Exactly how Kleist conceives of the act of speaking as affecting and enhancing the thought process is initially unclear. While there is a certain psychosomatic similarity with Lessing's mediated acting, namely that a mental state is activated through physical means, with Lessing this was due to an accustomed correspondence between the mental state and physical action. Kleist, however, provides a differing account for what transpires and proposes that the relationship between the two functions in the same way as two wheels. "Die Sprache ist alsdann keine Fessel etwa wie ein Hemmschuh an dem Rade des Geistes, sondern wie ein zweites, mit ihm parallel fortlaufendes, Rad an seiner Achse," (DKV III, 536). Kleist's use of the image of the two wheels can be viewed as an attempt to explain the obscure relationship of thinking and speaking and is in the same vein as Schiller's use of weather and music imagery to explain the relationship between affective state and expression. Although Kleist refers to his method as "lautes Denken" in this image he is combating the conventional assumption that speaking expends the same kind of mental energy as thinking: if one speaks aloud, then it simultaneously impedes thinking. Kleist proposes instead that the two acts are independent of one another, in that they can operate without being at the expense of the other. In order to explain how speech can be spontaneous, which unlike affect appears entirely within intentionality, Kleist needs to provide speech with an autonomy that at least partially frees it from the domain of thought.

If speaking and thinking are effectively autonomous from one another, how can exercising one affect the other? While speaking is fundamental for Kleist's method, the speech act in itself cannot induce the spontaneity of thought for which he is striving. If this were the case, then one could conceivably speak alone in order to produce thought. It isn't quite speaking

as a physical act that activates mental processes that can otherwise not be intended. Rather the act of speaking initiates others in the process. The act of speaking makes one accountable to others in a way that incessant brooding doesn't and creates a set of outside circumstances to re*act* to. Speakers need to have someone in order to validate their use of speech. A present person provides legitimacy to speech; a reason to speak. As speech it might come across as repetitive, jumbled, and ineloquent, but it has the ultimate purpose of initiating another person into this process.[251] To speak without forethought is to surrender oneself to a host of unknown variables without a coherent understanding of the general course they will follow, deferring their own success to the reactions that emerge out of the act itself.

Although the speaker involves others in this process, this is anything but a typical dialogue. For Kleist the listener's possible verbal contribution is irrelevant. His essay abstracts the communicative goal out of the act of speaking and modifies it to ignite the thought process, requiring a human presence that appears to contribute nothing to the conversation. Kleist reorganizes its fundamental components into an active and a passive participant—a speaker and a listener—and mandates that speaking should only go in a single direction. The passive recipient does not participate verbally in Kleist's proposal; they give neither advice nor worded response. "Es braucht nicht eben ein scharfdenkender Kopf zu sein, auch meine ich es nicht so, als ob du ihn darum befragen solltest: nein! Vielmehr sollst du es ihm selber allererst erzählen" (DKV III, 534). The anecdote with Kleist's sister further demonstrates that the point is not to engage in a discussion, but to talk *at* the person "Nicht, als ob sie es mir, im eigentlichen Sinne *sagte*" (DKV III, 535). This returns to the issue of the question of why the presence of another is even needed if they are to remain silent. Why would an inanimate object, something incapable of

[251]Jill Anne Kowalik also asserts the disjuncture between speech and thought, in which empty speech can nevertheless result in successful thoughts. See "Kleist's Essay on Rhetoric" in Monatshefte Vol. 91, No. 4 (Winter 1989), 437.

response, not be enough? This is not presented as an option in "Allmähliche Verfertigung." Kleist's strategy for successful speech requires other people to be present and listening. The implication is that a listener is providing something required for this process.

Although this method requires silent interlocutors, their passivity is only apparent. Their contribution is through their bodies, namely through the nonverbal cues that betray their thoughts without the use of language. Kleist routinely draws attention to the role that bodies play in this process. In his first example Kleist provides this very implicitly. The first instance of this is the imaginary image of Rühle von Lilienstern, which Kleist constructs at the very beginning of the essay. He writes "ich sehe dich zwar große Augen machen," (DKV III, 534). With this facial expression, Kleist is interpreting meaning from nonverbal cues, which the imagined image of Rühle von Lilienstern provides him. Before hearing a word of reply, Kleist already infers from the nonverbal behavior that his audience is confused by what he just said and that it goes against what has been traditionally acceptable. They provide the speaker with helpful hints as to what his audience is thinking, and are thus a part of an implicit dialogue that occurs between two participants. This is not, however, an instance where Kleist's method is being completely exercised. There is no great epiphany in this exchange. Kleist is dealing with an imagined image, not the actual presence of another. He is instead demonstrating the importance of the nonverbal communicative element that occurs in settings with two or more persons. By doing this, he is setting up this element as significant for future examples and informing the reader that more is taking place than simply one person addressing another.

The first true instance of this process at work is the anecdote of Kleist talking to his sister as a means to assist him in solving a math problem. Kleist claims "Dabei ist mir nichts heilsamer, als eine Bewegung meiner Schwester, als ob sie mich unterbrechen wollte" (535-36).

The slight pressure the body provides adds to the process. This act is in its essence part of a very communicative process. Kleist, in the company of his sister, observes that she wants to interrupt him.[252] Kleist is learning quite a bit just from this quiet gesture. He perceives her eagerness to participate in the conversation and her desire to make a point of her own. The movement of his sister informs her brother how she might feel at a given time. Gestures to interrupt are normally given after a spoken comment that is provocative or contentious. Without saying a single word, the sister is letting Kleist know that a certain part of his speech is worthy of comment. Most important of all, Kleist refers to the movement his sister makes as *heilsam*, a metaphor of the body. The effects of her potential objections to his speech are considered by Kleist to actually be helpful to his process, because they remedy the immature and imperfect nature of the thought.

His anecdote featuring Mirabeau's "Donnerkeil" functions similarly. Kleist recounts how Mirabeau, a great orator of the French Revolution, is pressed for an answer to the king's order by the master of ceremonies. His subsequent "lautes Denken" enabled him to pull his thoughts together and create successful speech, which embodies the earlier declaration that many great speakers had little idea of what they were going to say before they spoke. Kleist compares this process to an example from the physical sciences: "nach einem ähnlichen Gesetz, nach welchem in einem Körper, der von dem elektrischen Zustand Null ist, wenn er in eines elektrisierten Körpers Atmosphäre kommt, plötzlich die entgegengesetzte Elektrizität erweckt wird" (DKV III, 537). Kleist's reference to "Donnerkeil" and electricity once again emphasizes the spontaneity of the thought process and positions it within the multiple instances explored thus far that utilize

[252]Bernhard Greiner highlights the necessity of others in this process when he makes the claim that Kleist's sister is "in der Position einer virtuell Unterbrechenden, als in der Position derer, die nachfragen will, die klärende Unterscheidungen oder Spezifikationen verlangt," and thus provides the pressure to perform that is lacking in meditation or brooding. See *"Mediale Wende des Schönen –‚fries spiel' der Sprache und ‚unaussprechlicher Mensch'. „ Über die allmähliche Verfertigung der Gedanken beim Reden" „Brief eines Dichters an einen anderen"* in *Heinrich von Kleist: Neue Wege der Forschung* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2003), 164.

imagery of thunder and lightning to describe obscure processes within the body. In addition, Kleist in this instance highlights the materiality of this encounter as one between bodies, and makes it clear that the presence of another body enables the immaterial process of thought. Speaking without a prior plan of what to say only works with the presence of other bodies. Kleist continues to emphasize the dualistic framework of this process by claiming "Dies ist eine merkwürdige Übereinstimmung zwischen den Erscheinungen der physischen und moralischen Welt, welche sich, wenn man sie verfolgen wollte, auch noch in den Nebenumständen bewähren würden," (DKV III, 537).[253] Like Lessing and Schiller, Kleist's issue with spontaneity is also a question of the relationship between material and immaterial substance. Although he cannot explain the mechanics of this process, it is sufficient for Kleist to attest to the occasional correspondence between the mental and physical worlds as evidence that his process is empirically plausible.

This anecdote makes plain that this process contains two moments of spontaneity: the act of speaking and the activation of thought. Speaking might appear problematically labeled as spontaneous, since it is intentional, but Kleist leaves open to contingency the content of that speech by not thinking about it beforehand. The first moment of spontaneity creates an external set of circumstances to react to, and thereby activates the moment of spontaneity: thought. In a certain sense this mirrors Kleist's anecdote of the horse, in which the horse creates an unexpected moment on the stage that allows the actor Unzelmann to showcase his improvisational talent. The first spontaneous moment generates the disorder that enables the response of a second spontaneous moment to order it. The productivity of spontaneity is predicated on it being reactive.

[253]Kleist's meaning of *moralisch* is to be understood according to the eighteenth century parlance of Kantian philosophy in which the moral sphere is outside of the realm of phenomena.

By setting up a speaker and a seemingly passive recipient whose physical presence creates situations for the mind to react to, Kleist situates the two as a part of an implicit dialogue. Yet if Kleist's method is more or less a dialogue by other means, why does he claim that speech should go only in a single direction? Interesting to note is that the dialogue is never the target of criticism, but rather the attempts to perfect thought before speech. Although Kleist does not oppose dialogues, each of his anecdotes present situations in which the exchange of ideas would be either pointless (speaking with his sister who is not versed in mathematics) or impossible (the impending threat of violence in Mirabeau's oratory before the Estate General and in his example of La Fountaine's fable exclude the efficacy of dialogues).

There is another situation that fits this mold that doesn't appear among the anecdotes, but is nevertheless one with which Kleist would have been quite familiar: the theater. Each of the examples from "Allmähliche Verfertigung" represents a theatrical moment, in which a single individual performs while silent and passive recipients watch. Kleist alludes, however, to the theatrical value of his method with his brief but important comparison with the French dramatist Molière.

> In diesem Sinne begreife ich, von welchem Nutzen Moliere seine Magd sein konnte; denn wenn er derselben, wie er vorgibt, ein Urteil zutraute, das das seinige berichten konnte, so ist dies eine Bescheidenheit, an deren Dasein in seiner Brust ich nicht glaube. Es liegt ein sonderbarer Quell der Begeisterung für denjenigen, der spricht, in einem menschlichen Antlitz, das ihm gegenübersteht, ein Blick, der uns einen halbausgedrückten Gedanken schon als begriffen ankündigt, schenkt uns oft den Ausdruck für die ganze andere Hälfte desselben (DKV III, 536).

This presents another example of a speaker who requires the presence of another to actualize a nascent thought, in which Molière and his servant girl occupy the position of Kleist and his sister respectively. Kleist's use of the servant girl is a reiteration of the irrelevance of the "interlocutor". In effect this system replicates many of the same relationships that are found in

the theater, further attested to in this example as Molière was not only a dramatist but also an actor. The presence of another provides an immediacy and accountability that was missing from Sosias' dress rehearsal in front of the lantern. As much as Kleist's process and the workings of the theater display some resemblances, the text is far more interested in more traditional oratory moments like speech-making. Kleist is effectively expanding the discourse of corporeal spontaneity onto other professions. While the text is about the theater, it also sees performative potential outside of it.

While there is a clearly diminished role for thought in this process, Kleist isn't proposing a reliance on unconscious or non-conscious states. In fact, an awareness of one's surroundings is imperative for the method, since it allows the perception of the presence of another. In this way, Kleist is simultaneously giving a counterexample to Schiller's sleepwalking actor. The second advantage of the sleepwalker is the ability to forget the audience in order to perform as if no one is watching. By incorporating the presence of the audience into the performance Kleist transforms what Schiller believes is the great disadvantage of the actor into its strength. Instead of forgetting the audience, the pressure of performance gives rise to spontaneity of thought. By including the audience into the performance Kleist is rethinking the nature of theatrical signs (from the audience now). It is perhaps more productive to think about how this relationship between performer and audience also problematizes the typical understanding of the theater (non-improvisational theater at least). The text in a certain way inverts the position of the actor and audience. Just as in more conventional notions of the theater, where the actor's bodily signs affect the audience, Kleist reverses the roles by bestowing upon the audience the power of corporeal signs. Instead of the goal being the audiences' affective reaction, it is rather how the signs of the audience give the performer a moment of realization.

In my chapter on Lessing I argued that the character Marwood from “Miss Sara Sampson” overcomes the problem of spontaneously occurring affects by *scripting* reality, rendering her encounters into a predictable chain of events in the hope that decreasing the occurrence of unknown variables will correspondingly decrease her chances of having a revealing affective moment. Kleist in “Von der Überlegung” and “Allmähliche Verfertigung” does the exact opposite: he *de-scripts* reality by removing a plan or model for behavior and embracing spontaneity. At the same time the act of de-scripting is not a complete surrendering of one’s self to contingency. Kleist ensures the reader that his method will produce desirable results, and deviating from it will result in the opposite. While spontaneity creates unpredictable possibilities, Kleist’s method is based on its reliability, the assumption that future performances will work as past ones have. In fact the inclusion of this methodology is to ensure that the unpredictable doesn’t happen. Rather, it is a kind of spontaneity that de-scripts, relies on reaction and contingency and exploits it in predictable means. Kleist is thus proposing another version of the kind of staging of spontaneity examined thus far: harnessing spontaneity for performative purposes.

Conclusion

How should an actor perform? This seemingly innocuous question has produced an array of responses that continue to be the subject of intense debates on the theater to the present day. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries these debates centered on issues surrounding the actor's relationship with the spontaneous aspects of his own body. The unique challenge that actors found themselves in on the stage—the representation of contrived gestures in a spontaneous way—allowed actors to serve as an impetus for thinkers to re-conceptualize the demarcation between human agency and the autonomy of the body. The question of how an actor should perform concentrated on how to extend intentionality into uncharted realms that would deliver spontaneous action into the hands of volition and calculation. Yet as is attested by these thinkers' often-used storm simile, there is an inherent danger in trying to catch lightning in a bottle. The unpredictability, and in the case of affect, volatility, associated with corporeal spontaneity poses the question of whether spontaneous signs were compatible with other aims of the theater. Goethe would reject spontaneity in all its forms as a threat to the aesthetic integrity of the work of art. Yet for Lessing and the early Schiller, the prospect of enlarging the domain of human agency and of appropriating the coveted signs of corporal spontaneity for the theater was too alluring to ignore. Kleist would develop this notion to its more radical extreme, diminishing intentionality and instead relying on the contingency of corporeal spontaneity to react as a paradoxical means of extending human agency.

For each of these thinkers, the question of the relationship between the actor and his body extends well beyond the realm of the theater. Attending to the complexity of this issue required

these thinkers to draw on a multitude of other discourses. The process of theorizing about the nature of acting simultaneously also served as an impetus for rethinking these very same discourses. It is out of a concern for acting practices that Lessing developed a theory of mediated gestures that anticipated his theories of media and semiotics in his *Laokoon*. Schiller drew on his experience in medicine and the human body to theorize on the structure of affect and expression specifically for the stage. Goethe, in the hopes of locating a model for the containment of spontaneity, turned towards painting and sculpture. Intervening in and augmenting Schiller's observations from *Anmut und Würde*, Kleist would present fundamental similarities between the actor's corporeal spontaneity and reaction-oriented notions of the body as seen in athletes and soldiers. The figure of the actor and the issues that emerge out of corporeal spontaneity pose a set of problems that requires a dialogue between otherwise disparate discourses.

Finally, the concern for the spontaneity of the actor's body reveals that the two dominant schools of thought on acting in Germany during this period—the natural acting paradigm and Weimar Classicism—are not as oppositional as is often claimed. While the two take opposing sides on the relationship of *Natur* and *Kunst*, both conceptualize this relationship in terms of the aesthetics of concealment, often referred to a *Täuschung*. The aesthetics of Weimar Classicism, with its emphasis on aesthetic autonomy, might have been an extension of the logic of the natural acting paradigm. It is only a small step from negating the beholder and sealing off the stage in the name of fourth-wall theatrical realism, to proclaiming the sovereignty of the stage and the triumph of self-contained and autonomous art over the concept of mimesis. Exploring how corporeal spontaneity manifests in acting practices brings this tension to the forefront by probing the locations of autonomy in the theater. Affect for the stage was viewed as a necessary strategy for giving the impression of anti-theatricality, one which requires cultivating a degree of

autonomy for the components of the work of art in order to appropriate the signs produced by it. This view conflicts with Weimar Classicism when the autonomy of the stage becomes a value in itself. Aesthetic autonomy can brook no traces of the real under its domain, no independence among its component parts that would threaten the integrity of the singular structure of the work of art. Goethe's "Regeln für Schauspieler" instantiates the struggle to subvert the autonomy of actors and their bodies, concealing its origins in *Natur*, so that it conforms with the greater autonomy of the work of art. Not until the early twentieth century would the centrality of concealment for the aesthetics of the theater be reevaluated.

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